TRADITIONAL PHYTOTHERAPY FOR SNAKE BITES
BY TRIBES OF DANTA TALUKA, GUJARAT, INDIA

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ABSTRACT:
An ethno-medicinal survey was undertaken in the taluka to collect information from traditional health healers/tribals on the use of medicinal plants for snake bites through questionnaire and personal interviews during study visits. The investigation reveals that the local health healers/tribals used 08 plants belonging to 07 families with 09 formulations. The study also reveals that many people of the Danta taluka still continue to rely on traditional medicine for their primary healthcare. Recent trend shows a decline in the number of traditional health practitioners in the region since the younger generation is not interested to continue this tradition. There is little documentation of the ethnomedicinal knowledge was carried out in the taluka. In addition, several wild medicinal plants are declining in number due to the destruction and unscientific collection of plants from forests. Hence there is an urgent need for exploration and documentation of the traditional knowledge in order to ascertain the local ethnomedicinal plants. Therefore present study is an attempt to present ethnomedicinal observations recorded with respect to snake bites.

KEY WORDS: Phytotherapy, Ethnomedicine, Snake bite.

INTRODUCTION:
The vast diversity of flora and fauna is the outcome of millions years of organic evolution on the earth. They are interdependent, interrelated and interacting with the physico-chemical environment facilitating the flow of energy and material cycling. Since ages man relied on plants as a sole source of medicine. The knowledge has been transmitted from generation to generation. Out of 250,000 flowering plant species only 1.2% have been analysed for medicinal value. The art of herbal healing has very deep roots in Indian culture and folklore. Even today in most of the rural areas, people are depending on local traditional healing systems for their primary health care. Documentation of indigenous knowledge through
ethnobotanical studies is important for the conservation and utilization of biological resources. Today 80% of the world’s population depends on traditional medicine for their primary health care needs (WHO). Medicinal plants are the backbone of the traditional medicine, this means that, 3300 million people in the underdeveloped countries utilize medicinal plants on a regular basis (Dobriyal et al., 1998). The objective of the present study was to document the richness of ethno-medicinal plant species used by the tribal and traditional health healers of Danta taluka and the practices of the people towards the conservation and sustainable utilization of biological resources of the said region. Similar type of studies has been carried out by several workers in several parts of the country (Hebbar et al. 2002, Harsha V.H. et al. 2003, Ignacimuthu S, et al. 2006).

METHODOLOGY:
Periodic field surveys were carried out in different villages of Danta taluka. Data were collected from the tribals, local vaidyas, village elders through personal communication and questionnaire. The data include the plant name, local name, part used and therapeutic uses and the frequency of collection of plants etc. Voucher specimens were collected and identified by referring standard flora (Hooker, 1884; Gamble 1936, Saldhana, 1984). It was found that some of the present information has not so far been available in literature.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:
The present investigation reveals that the plants used to treat snake bite are commonly available in the local forests. The method of preparation and mode of action is also simple and convenient. Hence most of the local people can afford the traditional treatment and having personal faith and believe gave encouraging results in the treatment of snake bites. The present paper gives a detailed account of 08 plants (Table 1) as herbal remedies for snake bite by the tribal and traditional health healers of Danta taluka. The date indicates that tribal people used 08 plants for the treatment of snake bite under 09 formulations.

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REFERENCES:


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Table 1. Showing plant parts used for curing Snake bites by the tribes of Danta taluka

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr.No.</th>
<th>Botanical Name</th>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Plant parts used / Formulations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Acacia arabica Benth.</td>
<td>Mimosaceae</td>
<td>Leaf and areca nut with betel leaf paste is applied.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Achyranthes aspera L.</td>
<td>Acanthaceae</td>
<td>Root extract is applied on the spot and taken orally also.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Adathoda vasaka Nees.</td>
<td>Acanthaceae</td>
<td>The root paste along with goat milk is given orally.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 4.     | Aristolochia indica L.          | Aristolocaceae| -Fresh root extract along with pepper is applied on the spot. 
                   |                   | -The leaf paste of these plants along with garlic and pepper given orally                      |
| 5.     | Calotropis gigantia (L.)        | Asclepiadaceae| Plant latex is mixed with asafoetida (ingu) grind well and applied on the spot.               |
| 6.     | Tinospora cordiafolia (Wild.) Hook. | Minispermaceae| Leaf juice along with garlic paste is applied on the spot and also taken orally.              |
| 7.     | Tylophora asthmatica (L. f) Wright & Arn., | Asclepiadaceae| Root extract with pepper and garlic or onion juice is taken orally.                          |
| 8.     | Urtica dioica L.                | Urticaceae    | Root extract along with cow urine, pepper and garlic applied on spot.                         |