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HEALING HERBS OF WORLD HERITAGE SITE: THE VALLEY OF FLOWERS

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ABSTRACT :

Valley of Flowers national park is an Indian national park, located at a height of 3200m to 6675m in west Himalaya and it is renowned for its meadows of endemic alpine flowers and the variety of medicinal plants. Due to its unique geographical location and different climatic condition it has unique habitat specificity and availability of variety of plant species. Where small communities fight various diseases through the traditional methods. These do not either occur elsewhere or have not so far been exploited. Tribal communities living in biodiversity rich areas possess a wealth of knowledge on the local utilization and conservation of food and medicinal plants. Local people of this region are basically depends upon medicinal plants for their primary health care system. The present study deals with the ethno medicinal information of 35 plant species used by the tribal people near to valley of flower; district Chamoli for their health care. Attempts have been made to explore traditional knowledge of some medicinal plants in area adjacent to Valley of Flowers. This study can serve as baseline information on medicinal plants and could be helpful to further strengthen the conservation of these important resources.

Key Words: Valley of Flowers,Himalayan Herbs, Ethno medicine.

INTRODUCTION: Ethno medicine, a branch of ethno botany, is a set of empirical local practices embedded in the indigenous knowledge of a social group often transmitted orally from generation to generation. Indigenous knowledge systems are culturally valued and scientifically important. India abounds in its ethnic diversity, in which many aboriginal cultures have retained traditional knowledge concerning the medicinal utility of the native flora. Medicinal plants are the principal health care resources among the most of people in India The traditional healing systems are culturally acceptable and induce locals to use the plant resource most, because of the high level of cohesion and strong cultural links with nature in mountain areas. In many of the well developed ancient civilizations this knowledge was evaluated, codified, recorded and formed an essential part of the texts of their traditional systems of medicine. Ayurveda the science of life present on earth since thousands of years, which is based on nature and developed by nature only. *Acharya Charak* had rightly said for proper identification and uses can be well known by taking the knowledge from people living in the forest[1]. Today there is a realization to preserve the enormous wisdom, traditional knowledge and also the cultures associated with them.

Valley of Flowers National Park is an Indian national park, located in *Dev-Bhoomi* of Uttarakhand, at a height of 3200m to 6675m in west Himalaya and it is renowned for its meadows of endemic alpine flowers and the variety of medicinal plants. The valley was declared a national park in 1982 and now it is a World Heritage Site. The locals believed that it was inhabited by fairies. This region has a great wealth of medicinal plants and traditional medicinal knowledge. Medicinal plants have played an important role of primary health care system among the local people of Himalayan region. As the local people are settled far from urban area, they cannot take modern health care facilities so they are totally dependent on traditional medicinal practices for their primary health care. The indigenous knowledge is predominantly used for utilization of plant resource for various purposes, and high priority needs to be given to the documentation of indigenous knowledge and use of plant resources to help their conservation.

MATERIAL AND METHOD: Present study was carried out in the Chamoli districts of Uttarakhand state and based on extensive and intensive literature surveys, carried out in different universities, institutions and organizations, different Ph.D. thesis, Research papers, short communications, articles and flora providing information on medicinal and aromatic plants were studied thoroughly and available information was recorded. The data present in the current paper is based on the compilation of collections made by other authors. Description of the species stated with correct name, vernacular name (local dialect), part used, and therapeutic uses. Many plants which have no specific use is known are yet regarded as medicinal herb by different authors. So being a part of this *Bhoomi* of *Rishi-Munis* a sincere attempt is made to contribute in exploring the unknown diversity of medicinal plants in Valley of Flowers and their ethno-medicinal uses.

Following table shows the local name of the plants with their botanical source, used parts, and their traditional uses.

Table No. 1:- "Traditional Uses and of Medicinal Plant Adjacent to Valley of Flowers"[2,3,4,5]

S. No	Botanical Name	Local Name	Parts Used	Uses
1.	*Aconitum balfourii*	Meeta Vish	Tuber	Fever, Sciatica,inflammation , Paralysis
2.	*Aconitum violaceum*	Kadwi	Whole Plant	Scorpione Bites, Fever,
3.	*Anemone obtusifolia*	Kanch Phool	Roots, Seeds	Menorrhagia, Rheumatism
4.	*Anemone vitifolia*	Mudeela	Roots, Leaves	Ring Worm, Eczema, Toothache, Scabies
5.	*Arabis amplexicaulis*	Ban Sarsaun	Leaves	Body Pain
6.	*Astragalus himalyanus*	Semuel	Seeds	Colic pain, Leprosy
7.	*Astrangalus candollcanus*	Rudravanthi	Roots	Blood Purifier, Tuberculosis

8.	*Berberis aristata*	Kingor	Bark, Roots	Opthalmia, Fever, Anaemia
9.	*Caltha palustris*	Shomalap	Leaves, Flowers	Anaemia, Warts, Gonorrhea
10.	*Capsella bursa-pastoris*	Botlya, Tuntkya	Whole Plant	Blood Pressure, Cuts, Wounds, Urinary Diseases
11.	*Clematis barbellata*	Bhujvir, Kangali	Leaf, Root	Skin dieases
12.	*Clematis Montana*	Kaunja	Leaves	Diabetes, Sinusitis
13.	*Corydalis meifolia*	Tongzil	Whole Plant	Headache, Liver Disorder, Stomach Pain
14.	*Delphinium denudatum*	Jadwar, Nirbishi	Roots, Leaves	Weakness, toothache, Snakebite
15.	*Desmodium elegans*	Chamlai	Roots	Carminative, epilepsy, Peptic ulcer
16.	*Geranium nepalense*	Phori, Syunli	Roots	Cuts, Wounds, Fever,
17.	*Gerenium wallichianum*	Laljar, Kaphlya	Roots	Ear and Eye Disease, Hair fall
18.	*Hypericum oblongifolium*	Chitroi, Chaya	Leaves, Stem	Normal Vaginal Delivery
19.	*Hypericum perforatum*	Choli, phulya	Leaves	Fever
20.	*Impatiens sulcata*	Chaul, Kwal	Whole Plant	Skin Diseases
21.	*Indigofera heterantha*	Kathi, Sakina	Whole Plant	Urinary disorders,
22.	*Meconopsis aculeate*	Neela Posta	Whole Plant	Painkiller, Inflammations
23.	*Oxalis corniculata*	Bhilmori	Leaves	Cough, cuts, diuretic, epilepsy
24.	*Paeonia emodi*	Ghandrain, Udsalap	Root	Cough, Diarrhoea, Wounds, Hysteria
25.	*Parochetus communis*	Teen Patri	Whole Plant	Cuts, Wounds, Hyperacidity
26.	*Podophyllum hexandrum*	Ban Kakri	Rhizome	Constipation, Wounds, Hepatic diseases
27.	*Reinwardtia indica*	Phiunil	Leaves	Mouth Disorders,
28.	*Silene conoidea*	Chota Takla, Thumriya	Whole Plant	Opthalmia
29.	*Silene edgeworthii*	Bakrolya	Leaves	Eye infections
30.	*Stephania glabra*	Gindaru, Ganeeth	Tuber	Asthama, Convulision,
31.	*Thalictrum foliolosum*	Mamiri	Root	Opthalmia, Colic Pain,

				Fever
32.	*Trifolium repens*	Satphal,	Leaves	Rheumatism, Gout
33.	*Vicia bakeri*	Ban Churchuriya, Vilya	Seeds	Purgative
34.	*Viola biflora*	Banafsa,	Leaves, Seeds, Roots	Constipation, Cough, psoriasis
35.	*Viola pilosa*	Thungtu	Whole Plant	Fever, Cough, Cold,

Indigenous knowledge, supplemented by the latest scientific insights, can offer new holistic models of sustainable development that are economically viable, environmentally benign and socially acceptable. Currently, approximately 25% of allopathic drugs are derived from plant based compounds, and many others are synthetic analogues built on prototype compounds isolated from plant species[6]. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), as many as 80% of the world's people depend on traditional medicine to meet their primary health care needs.

DISCUSSION: The present situation of traditional knowledge regarding to medicinal plants everywhere is an issue of deep anxiety as the traditional knowledge is gradually declining and disappearing from the countryside. The indigenous knowledge is predominantly used for utilization of plant resource for various purposes, and high priority needs to be given to the documentation of indigenous knowledge and use of plant resources to help their conservation. Due to the unavailability of modern health facilities, poverty, connectivity with urban centre, awareness, etc. people in rural areas are still relying on traditional medicines for their health care. Many communities use wild plant parts for the primary healthcare, due to belief in its effectiveness, easily available, lack of modern medicines. Despite significance development of rural health services, village people still use herbal folk medicines to a good extent for treatment of common ailments like cough, cold and fever, headache and body-ache, constipation and dysentery, burns, cuts and scalds, boils, ulcers, skin diseases and respiratory troubles, convulsions, snake bite and others. Traditional knowledge provides the basis for problem-solving strategies for local communities, especially the poor.There are significant economic benefits in the development of indigenous medicines and in the use of medicinal plants for the cure of various diseases.[7] The healthy climate, pollution free environment and the availability of a wide range of flora and fauna in the mountainous terrain, make Uttarakhand an ideal location for developing centres for alternative medicine and health care facilities. A significant portion of Uttarakhand is under forest cover (almost 70 percent). There is, thus, excellent potential for the development of forest resources based Industries in the State. The fast acceleration of market demand for herbal medicines, and recent controversies related to access, benefit sharing and bio-piracy, the documentation of indigenous knowledge is of urgent priority.

CONCLUSION:

Indigenous plant based traditional knowledge and use has become a recognized tool in search for new sources of drugs and pharmaceuticals Strengthening the wise use and conservation of indigenous knowledge of useful plants may benefit and improve the living standard of poor people. It is important to explore and preserve knowledge before traditional folklores are lost forever. We are yet to explore fully the vast store house of indigenous and traditional system of medicine in India.

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