



Original Research Article

ETHNO-VETERINARY WISDOM OF BIRHORE TRIBES OF JHARKHAND

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Abstract: The state Jharkhand, is rich in biodiversity and the knowledge of its traditional usage. The tribe *Birhore*, of Jharkhand is the custodian of traditional botanical knowledge and their life is solely dependent on forest. Due to various anthropogenic as well as natural reasons, the population of *Birhore* is shrinking rapidly. So it is needed to document their knowledge. Conservation and proper management of local vegetation is required for sustainable existence of the tribe. The paper deals with the plants used by this tribe for various purposes. Plants with botanical names, family, local names and parts used, mode of preparation and administration is given. The plants are therapeutically used against different diseases of cattle, such as dysentery, diarrhea, boils and FMD are covered.

Key Words: *Birhore*, Jharkhand, Ethnobotany, Ethno-veterinary, Traditional knowledge.

INTRODUCTION

Birhore, the most primitive tribe of Jharkhand is basically confined to areas of Dhanbad, Hazaribagh, Ramgarh and Koderma. Due to genetic and socio-economic reasons their population is decreasing. Presently their population is reported to be approximately 4,600. In Hazaribagh their population is 1,872 (maximum) and in Dhanbad is 143 (minimum) (Sahu 2004). In Dhanbad district, they live in Chalkari village of Topchanchi block. Basically *Birhore*s are nomadic, hunters and food collectors for which they depend entirely on forest. Their high degree of co-existence with forest has resulted in their knowledge of various medicinal uses of plants in curing human ailments as well as in veterinary practices. *Birhore*s have been divided into three groups on the basis of their life style. First, *Janghi*, are advanced and basically settled in the forest area and practice traditional system of agriculture. Second, *Uthlu* consists of hunters, food gatherers and rope making is their main occupation for earning. Third, *Basulu* are intermediate transitional semi nomadic in nature.

Birhore are supposed to be the custodian of traditional botanical knowledge of rich biodiversity of Jharkhand. Their life is solely dependent on the forest. Along with medicinal uses they know about their distribution, specific characteristics (toxicity, palatability), seasonal availability and ecological relationship. Documentation of traditional ethno veterinary use of various medicinal plants has not been done properly. Such information's are needed to be authenticated and amalgamated in mainstream botany. As the population of *Birhore*s is decreasing very fast and also the traditional knowledge, so the documentation is essential to conserve their ethno veterinary practices. Present study was undertaken to evaluate traditional veterinary practices of *Birhore* using locally available plants. Mairh et al., (1992) have studied ethno medicinal practices of *Birhore*.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The *Pahan* (priest) of the tribe was asked about plants they use for veterinary uses but did not disclosed it, but regular visit to Tanda (village) resulted in gaining knowledge of veterinary practices used by the *Birhore* tribe. For example once a lady was feeding goat with rice soup with dust of *Gurmana* leaf (*Kante ada*), when asked she said it is good for appetite and flatulence. Once we have seen the process of castration of male buffalo in which they have tied the legs and the snout with creepers of *Doodhilata* by using the stretch and hit method they have damaged the tube of vasa recti and then put up some soil on it by enchanting some mantras. Once a goat was having loose motions the villager entered the forest and brought some of the leaves of *Sanchi Dumar* and gave it to the goat, and results were observed in 6-8 hours by improving the thickness of stool.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Data on plant species used for veterinary purpose by *Birhore*s are presented (Table 1). The description includes plant name (Botanical name) and vernacular name used by *Birhore*s, family and plant uses in veterinary practices. Due to shrinking population of *Birhore*s it is necessary to document their herbal knowledge used in veterinary practices. Till now no such work has been reported. In the areas where the *Birhore*s lives there is no facility of Veterinary hospital is available and the veterinary doctors also do not visit the village so the *Birhore*s are totally dependent on indigenous knowledge of veterinary practices. The method is economic and popular among the tribes. For *Birhore*s the livestock are very important and is one of the parts of economy and rituals and they also make barter system of purchase. Identification the chemicals in above plants having medicinal value may be enhanced by undertaking the work at various research institutes.

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Table 1: List of plant used in veterinary practices with common name, botanical name, family and uses.

Botanical name	Family	Common name	Uses
<i>Semecarpus anacardium</i> Linn.	Anacardiaceae	Soso, Bhelwa	Sukha Rog in Which the animal becomes weak and muscular wasting starts. Three or five dried seeds are hanged in the neck.
<i>Croton oblongifolia</i> Roxb.	Euphorbiaceae	Putari, Pootar	Good source of natural minerals. Remarkably it is a substitute of common salt. Cattle fed on the leaves are healthy than the normal feed.
<i>Cryptolepis buchanani</i> Roem & Schutt.	Asclepiadaceae	Dudhalata	The latex is used on small pustules and lessons to heal infection.
<i>Pereira tuberosa</i> DC.	Fabaceae	Patal kohada, Patal Kumra,	The cut pieces of the tuber added in the fodder as food supplement.
<i>Sterculia urens</i> Roxb.	Sterculiaceae	Dadu, Telhar, Talhej	The gum is soaked in water and given to goat along with black gram in case animal suffer from stomach ache.
<i>Vitex negundo</i>	Vitaceae	Sinduar, Sindwar	The fumes produced from dried leaves are mosquito repellent.
<i>Ficus glomerata</i>	Moraceae	Sanchi Dumar	The leaves are given to goats to check loose motion. The result comes within 4 to 6 hours.
<i>Dioscorea bulbifera</i> Linn	Dioscoreaceae	Adu	The cut pieces of the tuber added in the fodder as food supplement.
<i>Oryza sativa</i>	Poaccae	Chawal, Rice	If an animal suffer from mount ulcer, the mouth is dipped in two to three days old rice soup (fermented).
<i>Cyperus rotundus</i>	Cyperaceae	Motha	The rhizome paste mixed in coconut oil is used to remove pain and restlessness.
<i>Azadirachta indica</i>	Meliaceae	Neem	The leaves are given as fodder. The goat takes till worm infestation becomes clear.
<i>Andrographis paniculata</i>	Acanthaceae	Kalmegh	The leaves are given as fodder. The goat takes till worm infestation becomes clear.
<i>Butea monosprema kuntze</i>	Dioscoreaceae	Muruk Dadu, Palash	The charcoal dust is applied on the scrotum after castration.
<i>Terminalia alata</i>	Combretaceae	Asan	The bark is partially burnt, applied on the boils and wounds. It remains stick to the skin surface till it heals.
<i>Acacia planifrons</i>	Leguminoseae	Kante ada	Leaves are crushed and added in rice water and fed to goat and cattle. It is good source of protein and reliefs in flatulence. In checks the diarrhea of the goats if given in high dose.
<i>Helicteres isora</i>	Sterculiaceae	Aintha	The paste of the fruits, minimum 5 (as per weight of the animal) mixed in jiggery is given to cure stomach ache and body ache.

Study on Ethno veterinary Practices by tribal people is an emerging area and very few people have ventured in this direction Jain and Srivastava 1999 and Bhatt *et al.*, 2001 are some noteworthy names in this field. Recently, in a similar work, Srivastava and Kumar 2014 threw some light on another vanishing tribe, Baiga Further systematic study is required in this direction.

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