



Traditional Herbal practices of Nail or toe disorder: A case study of Baksa district, Assam (N.E India).

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Abstract

The people of Baksa district of Western part of Assam frequently use some traditional medicine for minor bodily disorder. They have lot of experiences regarding herbal treatment of diseases like fever, intestinal worm, jaundice, cold and cough, head ache and many more. Here in this paper an attempt has been made to analyze data regarding treatment of nail or toe disorder. For this data were collected using a questionnaire and meeting the experienced knowledgeable persons in such traditional practices. The Plant items were collected in the presence of each particular healer who provided a particular recipe. Here four very simple recipes are mentioned. This disorder through not considered as a dangerous disease still a patient has to suffer a lot in severe case. Even the patient feels problem in walking, suffering from fever etc. But by following certain local health traditional practices one can get rid of this type of disorder before reaching severe condition.

Key words: Traditional, Nail disorder, Baksa herbal

Introduction

Baksa is a traditionally rich district of Western Assam as far as health practices are concerned. The people of this district frequently use some traditional medicine for minor bodily disorder. They have lot of experiences regarding herbal treatment of diseases like fever, intestinal worm, jaundice, cold and cough, head ache and many more. Here in this paper an attempt has been made to analyze data regarding treatment of nail or toe disorder.

These traditional health practices are accessible, affordable and culturally acceptable. This system has been passed on from one generation to the other without any written documentation. Due to socio-cultural and other reasons this knowledge system is being eroded very fast. But this is of much significance not only in the present regime of IPR, Patent rights etc, but also for new or alternative drug discovery. So it is very important to document or to preserve this type of traditional health care practices. Thus the study on traditional herbal practices of nail or toe disorder is having much significance.

Methodology

Extensive survey was carried out in different village of Baksa district like Belbari, Ramesuberi, Dongpar, Bhokotpara etc for data collection. Data were collected using a questionnaire and meeting the experienced knowledgeable persons in such traditional practices. The Plant items were collected with the help of the practitioners. These were identified following literature and confirmed by comparing them with BSI (Shillong) herbarium. The specimens were made into herbarium following standard Herbarium Techniques (Jain & Rao 1977)

Study Area

Baksa was declared as one of the districts of Bodoland Territorial Council in the month of October 2003 and started functioning in the year 2004(June). It is the North- Western part of Assam. It's District head quarter is Mushalpur which is about 105 km. from state capital Dispur. It occupies an area of 2400sq. km. The district is bounded by Bhutan in the north (International boarder), in the south it is Nalbari and Barpeta, the Kamrup; Udalguri district form its eastern boundary and Chirang district form its Western boundary. It is having a longitudinal extension of $90^{\circ}51' E$ to $91^{\circ}49' E$ and latitudinal extension of $26^{\circ}32' N$ to $26^{\circ}53' N$ latitude. The district occupies an area of 2400 sq km.

Result and Discussion**ITEM- I:**

Sl. No	Botanical Name	Family	Vernacular Name	Parts used	Quantity
1.	<i>Excoecaria oppositifolia</i> Griff.	Euphorbiaceae	Dudhgoch	Latex	One drop/ two drops

Mode of application: The painful nail disorder as it is caused due to uncleanliness of nails in which mud or sands enter inside the angles or corners of the nails. This happen mainly in the nails of feet. This is mostly seen in case of women or girls. They suffer too much pain in the nails particularly the toes. Bacterial infection is the main cause of this type of disorder.

In the preparation to control this painful nail disorder latex of *Excoecaria oppositifolia* Griff. plant is needed. The latex from this plant is applied at the corners of the painful nails, only one or two drops is sufficient. This way the practice should be done 3-7 days continuously. The sufferer should maintain cleanliness of her body.

ITEM -II

Sl. No	Botanical Name	Family	Vernacular names	Parts used	Quantity
1.	<i>Calamus tenuis</i> Roxb.	Arecaceae	Bet	Tender stem apex	1

Mode of application: The tender stem apex of *Calamus tenuis* Roxb. is at first roasted that is to make it hot over fire. Then it is made into paste and applied locally over the infected nails or toes. This is applied very nicely in the morning and allows it for several hours. This procedure is followed continuously for 3-4 days.

ITEM- III

Sl. No	Botanical Name	Family	Vernacular names	Pars used	Quantity
1.	<i>Commelina benghalensis</i> L	Commelinaceae	Kona-simolu	Branch	1
2.	<i>Ricinus communis</i> L	Euphorbiaceae	Eragoch	Leaves	1
3.	<i>Mimosa pudica</i> L	Mimosaceae	Lajuki lota	Leaves	3-4
4.	<i>Basella alba</i> L. var. <i>rubra</i> (L)Steward (B. <i>rubra</i> L.)	Basellaceae	Puroi sak	Tender shoot	1
5	<i>Sida acuta</i> Burm. f.	Malvaceae	Soru borial	Leaves	2
6	<i>Sida cordifolia</i> L	Malvaceae	Bor borial	Leaves	1

Mode of application: All these six (6) herbs are made into paste along with 2 heads of Cat fish. This mixture of paste is applied locally on the painful nail, and it is allowed to stay for sometimes. But before full drying cold water is applied over the paste again and again for several times. This should be done twice a day once in the morning and once in the evening. The process has to follow up for 4-5 days continuously. The healer advices the patient not to wrap the toes with cloth.

ITEM- IV

Sl. No	Botanical Name	Family	Vernacular names	Parts used	Quantity
1.	<i>Ananas comosus</i> (L.) Merr.	Bromeliaceae	Anarosh	Leaves	6 nos.
2.	<i>Tabernaemontana divaricata</i> (L)R.Br.	Apocynaceae	Kathanda	Flowers	5

Mode of application: All the materials i.e. the leaves of Pineapple (*Ananus comosus*), *Tabernaemontana divaricata* (The Pin wheel variety) flowers are made into paste. This paste is applied over the painful toes. But wrapping the infected part with cloth is strictly prohibited. This is followed twice a day and continuously for 5-6 days. This is frequently seen in case of women. In extreme case the patient has to suffer from fever.

Conclusion

Thus, such type of nail disorder through not considered as a dangerous disease still a patient has to suffer a lot in severe case. Even the patient feels problem in walking, suffering from fever etc. But by following certain local health traditional practices one can get rid of this type of disorder before reaching severe condition. This will be helpful on the other way in preserving the age old traditional knowledge which are not having any side effect and are also cost effective.

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Commelina benghalensis L



Tabernaemontana divaricata (L)R.Br.



Ananas comosus (L.) Merr.

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