

## ETHNOMEDICINAL PLANTS OF AHERI DIVISION OF GADCHIROLI DISTRICT IN MAHARASHTRA

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### **Abstract:**

*Aheri tahsil is located on the southern part of Gadchiroli district. Aheri is the largest tahsil in gadchiroli district covering area of 2282.70 km<sup>2</sup>. A major portion of Aheri area is covered by forest and the ethnic group Gond. The major local language is Gondi, however these people also know Marathi and Telugu as well. These tribals depend on forest resources for their daily needs including medicines. Usually they visit hakims (local doctor who prepare medicines from locally available plants only), for the treatment of any ailment.*

*A survey has been conducted in Aheri area, during winter and summer seasons to collect the information from tribal people, hakims. The data was obtained through personal interviews with tribal group leaders and hakims. Information of around 40 plants used by hakims for major diseases like blood pressure, diabetes, different types of pains and even Cancer was collected.*

**Key words:** Ethnic group, Gonds, Ethnomedicinal plants, plant uses.

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### **Introduction:**

A wide variety of plants are known to have medicinal properties and many of them are in use in different systems of medicine. There are many books which give information about medicinal uses of plants. India is one of the rich biodiversity spots of the world and about 43% of plants from this subcontinent (approximately 7,500 species) are reported to have medicinal value (Pushpangadan, 1995).

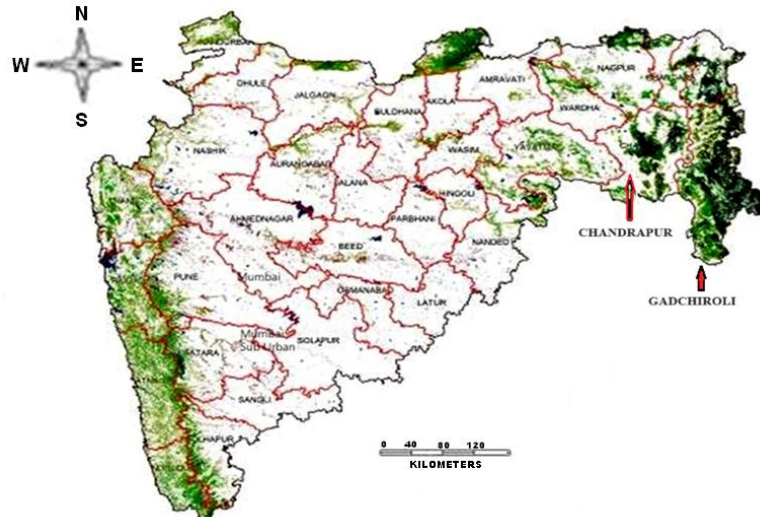
A brief ethnobotanical survey of plants used by Gond and Halbi the tribes of Chandrapur and Gadchiroli districts has been conducted by Tiwari and Padhye (1993) and Tiwari (1994).

Phanikumar and Chaturvedi (2010) had published a work on ethnobotanical observations of Euphorbiaceae family, from Vidarbha region of Maharashtra. Ethnobotanical plants of Markanda forest region was reported by Chavan and Margonwar (2015).

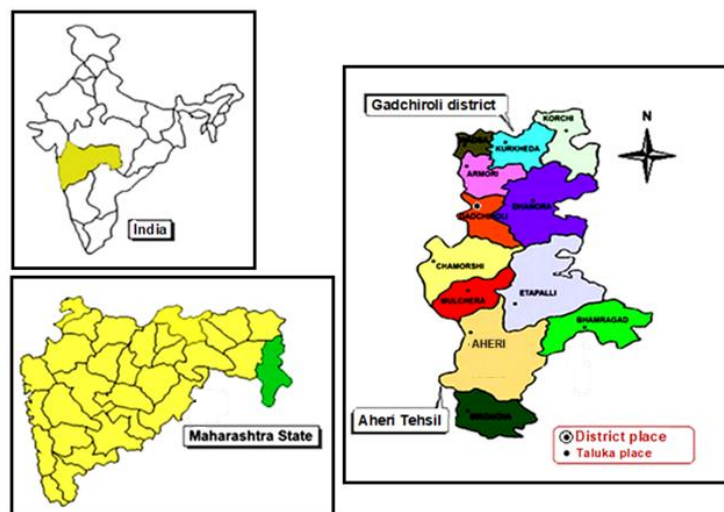
An information on ethnomedicinal diversity of a very few plants was described by Khonde & Halami (2009). The uses of some ethnomedicinal plants of Etapalli and Bhamragad in Gadchiroli district was reported earlier (Khonde et.al., 2014). The current study was made to explore the ethnomedicinal uses of wild species in this specific area.

**STUDY AREA :**

Gadchiroli district is covered by dense forest area in Maharashtra state (Fig. 1). Aheri tehsil is a forest sub-division of Gadchiroli district in Maharashtra state and is located on the banks of River Pranahita, which is a tributary of Godavari River (Jain S.K. et.al, 2007).



**Fig. 1: Map showing forest cover in Maharashtra state**



**Fig.2: Geographical details of study area**

**Material and Methods :**

The current survey has been conducted during winter and summer seasons to collect the information from tribal people, hakims. The data obtained through personal interviews with tribal group leaders and hakims was analysed. Information of around 40 plants used by hakims has been gathered. These plants are used for major diseases like blood pressure, diabetes, broken bones, different types of pains and even Cancer.

**Results and Discussion:**

Information on around forty Ethnomedicinal plants were collected, of which three plants belong to monocot families and rest are dicots. In the present observation, as many as 4 plants are from Acanthaceae, followed by Rutaceae, Asclepiadaceae and Euphorbiaceae with 3 plants from each, while Combretaceae and Rhamnaceae represented by two plants each. Rest of 23 families are represented by single useful species. The plants are used for common cold, cough, to kidney stones, urinary infections, and even for cancer treatment by the tribals.

The present survey revealed much of information which is not available in literature. This is completely new and many untold stories about the local plants and cure have been gathered from tribal groups of this division. One must accept the truth that extracting information from these tribals and hakims is not easy, as they fear of mainly two things – first is exploitation of these plants for commercial use will destroy the nature which they treat as sacred one; secondly the hakims (local medical practitioners) feel a threat to their livelihood. For these reasons they prefer to speak in their own tribal language Gondi only, even though they knew state language Marathi and other local language Telugu.

Though, secretly, we have observed that the tribals perform pooja before excising the part (which is used as medicine) from the plant (leaves, flowers, fruits or Bark). If it is root part they prefer late in the evening or very early in the morning and more importantly, small and young plants are selected for this purpose. The probable reason is they never destroy large plants as it is useful for further flowering and fruiting. The specific time for excising is that no outsider could able to find out the plant. Literally, all plants look alike and there is a chance to get lost in the jungle.

Some tribals, even perform pooja and spell some words before preparing medicine and applying to the patient, without which they believe the medicine would not work well and the ailment persists long.

It is observed that the tribal people are losing their traditional identity due to several developmental activities in and around tribal areas that are not related to their welfare, resulting in the loss of such treasures of plant genetic resources (Shankar, 1995).

The plants are being used by the tribals for different diseases, some of which are already known to us as available in texts, but not for the ailment told by them (Table 1).

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Table 1: ETHNOMEDICINAL PLANTS USED BY TRIBALS AND THEIR USES

Sr. No.	Botanical Name of Plant (Common Name)	Local name	Family	Part used	Uses
1	<i>Achyranthus aspara</i>	Aghada	Amaranthaceae	Root	Fits
2	<i>Aegle marmelos</i>	Belmarra / Belprimarra	Rutaceae	Leaf	Diabetes
3	<i>Amarphophallus commutatus</i>	Janglisuran	Araceae	Rhizome	Dysentery
4	<i>Andrographis paniculata</i>	Kalmegh	Acanthaceae	roots	Blood Pressure, Typhoid fever
5	<i>Andrographis sp.</i>	Kalgor marra	Acanthaceae	Fruit / Seed paste	Lower back pain (External)
6	<i>Barleria prionites</i>	Sonerimarra	Acanthaceae	Leaves, Flowers	Paralysis
7	<i>Boerhaavia diffusa</i>	Khapar khuti	Nyctaginaceae	Leaves	Sugar (used as vegetable also)
8	<i>Bombax spp.</i>	Kate savari	Bombacaceae	Bark	Dysentery
9	<i>Buchnanania lanzan</i>	Charoli	Anacardiaceae	Leaves Bark	Cold, caught Vomiting
10	<i>Butea superba</i>	yel palas	Fabaceae	Bark	Anti-ulcer; Liver protectant
11	<i>Calatropis procera</i>	Sateda	Asclepiadaceae	Root Leaf	Cobra bite Tumor & cancer
12	<i>Calatropis gigantea</i>	Rui	Asclepiadaceae	Leaf	Mad Dog bite (effective when patient is

					brought within 7 days)
13	<i>Cardiospermum helicabamum</i>	Kanphutimarra	Sapindaceae	Leaf	Ear ache
14	<i>Cassia fistula</i>	Rela marra	Caesalpiniaceae	Bark	Fistula, Piles
15	<i>Clerodendrum infortunatum</i>	Khandu chekka	Verbanaceae	Bark Corm	Bone problems Cancer
16	<i>Diaspyros melanoxylon</i>	Tembhurne	Ebenaceae	Young leaf	Sunstroke
17	<i>Dillenia pentagyna</i>	Michcho marra / Michad marra	Dilleniaceae	Bark	Blisters (External)
18	<i>Drimia indica</i>	pedda-ullimarra	Asparagaceae	Bulb	Urinary problems, Cardiac problems, Cough
19	<i>Euphorbia hirta</i>	Anikkaya	Euphorbiaceae	aerial part decoction	Stomach worms
20	<i>Heliotropium indicum</i>	Hatisur	Boraginaceae	Leaf	Diabetes
21	<i>Hibiscus sabdariffa</i>	Pullakura	Malvaceae	Leaves	Sunstroke
22	<i>Holarrhena pubescens</i>	Kuda	Apocynaceae	Bark	Malarial fever, Paralysis
23	<i>Justicia adathoda</i> (= <i>Adathoda vasica</i> )	Adulsamarra	Acanthaceae	Leaf juice	Cold, coughs (along with Ginger juice + honey)
24	<i>Manilkara hexandra</i>	Pala marra	Sapotaceae	Bark	Paralysis; Chest pain, Broken bones
25	<i>Mimosa pudica</i>	Lajulimarra	Mimosaceae	Leaf	Toothache
26	<i>Murraya konigii</i>	Kalyammarra	Rutaceae	Leaf	Digestion
27	<i>Olex imbricata</i>	haratfari	Olacaceae	root, bark	Diarrhea, inflammation
28	<i>Oroxylum indicum</i>	Tattumarra	Bignoniaceae	Leaf juice Roots, fruit, flowers,	Wound healing, tuberculosis, digestive tract problems, delivery related problem
29	<i>Pergularia daemia</i>	Utaranveli	Asclepiadaceae	Leaf	fevers (liver disorders)

30	<i>Phyllanthus niruri</i>	Bhui avlae	Euphorbiaceae	Leaf	Diabetes
31	<i>Ricinus communis</i>	Erandimarra /	Euphorbiaceae	Leaf (fried)	Piles
32	<i>Sorghum bicolor</i>	Jonna marrah	Poaceae	Bark decoction	Sickle cell disease
33	<i>Soymida febrifuga</i>	Sami/Somi marra	Meliaceae	Bark	Asthma, Malaria fever
34	<i>Strychnos potatorum</i>	Kai	Loganiaceae	Leaves	Kidney problems
35	<i>Terminalia arjuna</i>	Arjun	Combretaceae	Bark	Blood Pressure
36	<i>Terminalia bellerica</i>	Baheda	Combretaceae	Bark	Constipation
37	<i>Tinospora cordifolia</i>	Gudvel	Menispermaceae	Leaves	Sugar, Jaundice
38	<i>Ventilago denticulata</i>	Khandvel	Rhamnaceae	Bark, roots	Skin disease
39	<i>Zanthoxylum armatum</i>	Tembru	Rutaceae	Bark	Snake (Krait) bite
40	<i>Zizyphus jujuba</i>	Rengamarra	Rhamnaceae	Fruit	Toothache