

TRADITIONAL MEDICINAL PLANTS OF GUREZ (KASHMIR) – AN ETHNOBOTANICAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT: *Gurez Valley is situated along the Krishna Ganga river and is less exploited. It has reserve forests. The forests are very rich in herbal wealth. The population of the area consists of the types Dard, Kashmiries; Gujars and Pathans. They have got much faith in herbs and the elders of the family mostly know the uses of the herbs and prescribe for the ailments to their families and neighbours. The folklores of 56 plants species belonging to 50 genera and 28 families and neighbourers. The folklores of 56 plants species belonging to 50 genera and 28 families and their mode of administration were collected during the survey of the area. Botanical names with author citations, plant family, local name, connection with altitude and medicinal uses have been enlisted.*

INTRODUCTION

Gurez Valley comes under Kashmir. It lies between north altitude 34° – 23' and 34° – 41' and east longitudes 74° – 28'. It has an area of above 57842 hectares and situated along the almost east west flowing Krishna Ganga river. The climate of the area is normally temperate but varies due to different altitudes. The first fall of snow may occur in October or even earlier in the higher reaches. The winters are long extending from November to April when repeated heavy snow falls are experienced.

The people make their living chiefly by keeping large herds of livestock. The people and their localities are by and large not clean. Cattle's and human beings normally live in a same room. Due to their unhealthy living, skin diseases and tuberculosis are more common. Rheumatism is also very common due to excessive cold.

The population of the area may be classified into following types.

- I. *Dard* :- These predominate the area and are found in Gurez proper.
- II. *Kashmiris* :- Who seem to be migrated from Kashmir Valley occupy Bagtore side.
- III. *Gujars* :- These group living mostly in some village area, appear somewhat different from their counterparts elsewhere, particularly by an important characteristic of not possessing any buffaloes.
- IV. *Pathans* :- They are found in Bagtore and are migrated from Chilas.
- V. *Bakarwales*:- These also occupy the upper area where sufficient grassy land is available.

Gurez is the valley where there has not been much ethno-botanical or floristic exploration. Kapoor *et al* (1951) have passed through the area during summer 1946 and made casual mention of the plants of the area. Srivastava *et al* (1984) have mentioned floristic account of valley and also some ethno-botanical uses.

The people of the area have got much faith in traditional medicine. They normally do not prefer to go to allopathic doctors but usually depend upon own system of medicine and the herbs found near by areas. They collect the plant during the season of their flowering and preserve them for consumption during the year. Normally elder one of the family knows much about the plants and their uses and prescribes the herbs and their mode of administration. They normally prescribe the herb in powder form or decoction either single or in combination with other herbs.

The medicinal herbs and their relevant folklore collected during the investigation are presented below. For each species information is given in the following sequence: botanical name with author citation, plant family in brackets, local name, collection site with altitude and medicinal uses. The plant species are listed in alphabetical order.

Achillea millefolium Linn. (ASTERACEAE). "Monudnu" Sheetabagh (2425m).

Decoction of the dried herbs is used to cure cold, fever and liver complaints.

Aconitum chasmanthum Stapf ex Holmes (RANUNCULACEAE). "Patress". Gureinala (2736m.).

Dried powder of the roots is taken in small quantity to cure neuralgical problem and rheumatism.

A. heterophyllum Wall. Ex. Royale (RANUNCULACEAE). "Pateess". Kunzalwan (2730m).

Powdered roots in small doses is taken for diarrhoea, fever and dysentery. It is also used to cure enlargement of spleen.

A. violaceum Stapf (RANUNCULACEAE). "Bishmool" Dishan (2880m).

A small amount of the root is mixed with oil and applied on gums and teeth to cure tooth-ache.

Angelica archangelica Var. *Himalaica* (C.B. Clarke) Krishna & Badhwar (APIACEAE). "Chora". Kunzalwan (2730m).

A decoction of the roots and fruits is used as an expectorant.

A. glauca Edgew. (APIACEAE). "Chora". Kunzalwan (2730m).

Decoction of the plant is considered to be cardiac stimulant and also used to cure mental disorders.

Arctium lappa Linn. (ASTERACEAE – AE). "Cheerkachh". Markoot (2425m). Powder of the root is used as diurectic.

Artemisia absinthium Linn. (ASTERACEAE). "Chhuma-Jom". Dawar (2425m)

Dried herb in powdered form is used in epilepsy and fever.

A. martima Lin (ASTERACEAE). "Noorie". Sheetalbagh. (2425m).

Dried herb is taken in the form of a decoction to remove intestinal parasitic worm.

Atropa acuminata Royle (SOLANACEAE).
“Bellodona”. Sheetalbagh (2425m).

Roots and leaves are used as sedative, diuretic and analgesic.

Bergenia ciliate Sternb. Syn. *B. liqulata* Engl. (SAXIFRAGACEAE).
“Pahend/Korasadun”. Sheetal bagh (2425m).

Powdered rhizome is used as tonic and popularly used to break stones in bladder and kidney.

Betula utilis D. Don (BETULACEAE).
“Burz”. Rajdhani Pass (3630m).

Infusion of the bark is used as antiseptic.

Brunella vulgaris Linn. (LAMIACEAE).
“Kal-veoth”. Dawar (2425m).

Fresh juice of the plant is externally used to cure piles. Decoction is also used to cure fever and as an expectorant.

Bunium persicum (Boiss). Fedts. (APIACEAE).
“Kalajeera”. Dawar (2425m).

Decoction of the seeds is taken for the treatment of digestive ailments. It also increases milk flow in feeding mothers.

Bupleurum falcatum Linn. (APIACEAE).
Gureinala (2730m).

A decoction of the plant is used to cure liver troubles.

Carum carvi Linn. (APIACEAE). “Zeera”.
Kunzalwan (2730m).

Hot decoction of the fruits is used to cure various abdominal ailments. It also cures chronic menstrual disorders and leucorrhoea.

Cichorium intybus Linn. (ASTERACEAE).
“Kasini”. Dawar (2925m).

Powdered roots is given to cure liver, spleen and menstrual disorders.

Codonopsis ovata Benth. (CAMPANULACEAE).
Kunzalwan (2730m).

Powdered roots is used externally for ulcers and wounds.

Corydalis ramose Wall. (PAPAVERACEAE).
“Ralkul”. Kunzalwan (2730m).

A cold extract of the herb is used externally for eye diseases.

Cuscuta reflexa Roxb. (CONVOLVULACEAE).
“Janeo-bal”. Badwan (2425m).

A cold aqueous extract is used externally for washing wound.

Epipactis latifolia All. (ORCHIDACEAE).
“Ikchha-neuli”. Bagtora (3030m).

A decoction of the plant is taken in heart pain.

Euphorbia pilosa Linn. (EUPHORBIACEAE).
“Burse Kachh”. Bagtore (3030m).

A cold aqueous extract of the whole plant is used to cure fistular sores.

Euphrasia officinale Linn. (SCROPHULARIACEAE). “Pushi-kachh”. Fakirpur (2425m).

A decoction of the plant is taken to cure jaundice.

Fritillaria roylei Hook. F. (LILIACEAE) “Sheetkar”. Patalwan (3636m).

Powdered herb is used to cure tuberculosis and broncho-asthma.

Heracleum candicans Wall. (APIACEAE). “Churu/Mirkul”. Dishan (3030m).

Fruit powder is considered as aphrodisiac.

Hippophae rhamnoides Linn. (ELAEAGNACEAE). Dawar (2425m).

Jelly of the fruits is eaten for cure of hepatic enlargement.

Hyoscyamus niger Linn. (SOLANACEAE). “Bazarbang”. Fakirpur (2425m).

Powdered herb is used to cure asthmas and whooping cough.

Inula racemosa Hook. F. (ASTERACEAE). “Poshkar”. Dawar (2425m). Powdered root or its decoction is used to cure asthma and bronchitis.

I. royleana DC. (Asteraceae). “Punara / Poshkar”

Decoction of the root is used as an expectorant and paste of the herb is used to cure some skin diseases.

Juglans regia Linn. (JUGLANDACEAE). “Dun”. Dawar (2425m).

Bark and green pericarp of the fruit is used to make gum stronger and also to clean teeth.

Jurinea macrocephala Benth. (ASTERACEAE). “Dhup”. Rajdhani Pass (3630m).

Root decoction is given in colio pain.

Lavatera kashmiriana Camb. (MALVACEAE). “Reshma khatmi”. Fakirpur (2425m).

Root is used to cure rheumatic pain.

Macrotomia benthami & DC. (KORAGINACEAE). “Jogpasha / Gozaban”. Patalwan (2935m).

Root decoction is used as febrifuge, and also to cure ulcers.

Malva verticillate Linn. (MALVACEAE). “Pudinakachh”. Markoot (2425m).

A decoction of the leaves is recommended during pregnancy.

Mentha arvensis Linn. (LAMIACEAE). “Pudinakachh”. Markoot (2425m).

Decoction of the dried leaves is used as carminative.

M. longifolia (Linn.) LAMINACEAE. “PUDINAKACHHJ”. Markoot (2425m).

Decoction of the dried leaves is used as carminative.

Onosma hispidum Wall. Ex DC.
(BOROGINACEAE). "Rattan jot".
Shetalbagh (2775m).

Root decoction is used to cure ulcers. It is also given in combination with *Bergenia* spp. and *Rubia cordifolia* to break stones of kidney and bladder.

Orchis latifolia Linn. (ORCHIDACEAE).
"Nar-Mada". Markoot (2425m).

Powdered root is taken with milk for aphrodisiac action.

Origanum vulgare Linn. (LAMIACEAE).
"Marzanjosh". Dishan (2730m).

Warm decoction of the plant is given in menstrual suppression.

Pedicularis pectinata Wall.
(SCROPHULARIACEAE). "Khara".
Dawar (2425m).

Powdered herb is given to increase urine flow.

Picrorhiza kurrana Royle ex Benth.
(SCROPHULARIACEAE). "Kutki".
Patalwan (3630m).

Powdered roots are given to cure hepatic complaints especially in Jaundice.

Pimpinella diversifolia DC. (APIACEA).
"Hyo-kachh". Badwan (2425m).

Hot aqueous extract is used as carminative.

Plantago lanceolata Linn.
(PLANTAGINACEAE). "Phatal Kachh".
Sheetalbagh (2524m).

Seeds are taken with milk as a purgative.

Podophyllum hexandrum Royle
(BERBERIDACEAE). "Chhamadeh".
Bagtore (3030m).

Powdered roots are used in hepatic enlargement.

Polygonum viviparum Linn.
(POLYGONACEAE). "Churkee".
Gureinala (2880m).

Roots are used in diarrhoea and dysentery. The paste of the roots is applied externally to check bleeding and to heal ulcers.

Rubia cordifolia Linn. (RUBIACEAE).
"Manjithi". Sheetalbagh (2425m).

Roots are used in stomachache.

Saussurea lappa C.B. Clarke
(ASTERACEAE). "Koth/Beare/Minar".
Gureinala (2730m).

Paste of the roots is applied externally to cure rheumatism and joint pain.

Senecio Jacquemontianus Benth.
(ASTERACEAE). "Khalari". Rajdhanipass
(3630m).

Aqueous extract of the root is used as nerve tonic.

Solidago virgaurea Linn. (ASTERACEAE).
Dawar (2425m).

Dried plant powder is used as carminative and diuretic.

Taraxacum officinale Weber ex Wiggers
(ASTERACEAE). "Hand". Dawar
(2425m).

Decoction of the root is used as hepatic stimulant and specially used in jaundice.

Dried leaves in the form of a dish is usually given to pregnant ladies at delivery time for smooth delivery.

Taxus baccata Linn. (TAXACEAE).
“Postul”. Kunzalwan (2730m).

Decoction or dried bark in the form of a tea is used in asthma and bronchitis.

Thymus serpyllum Linn. (LAMIACEAE).
“Javen”. Sheetalbagh (2425m).

Whole herb in the form of decoction is used in flatulence and menstrual disorders.

Trifolium pretense Linn. (FABACEAE).
“Lalchopati”. Sheetalbagh (2425m).

Powdered herb in form of tea is used as an expectorant.

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Valeriana hardwickii Wall.
(VALERIANACEAE). “Mushk Bala”.
Bagtore (3030m).

Powdered root is snuffed to cure hysteria and epilepsy.

Viola sylvatica Fries (VIOLACEAE).
“Banafsha”. Dawar (2425m).

Dried plant is boiled and taken as a tea for curing cough, and cold.

Viscum album Linn. (VISCACEAE).
“Banada”. Sheetalbagh (2425m).

Warm paste of the plant is applied to cure rheumatism and joint pains.