Ethnomedicinal uses of Some Mythological Plants in Temple Towns of Chitrakoot District, India

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Abstract

Ethnomedicine is a subfield of ethnobotany that deals with the traditional medicines not only those that have relevant written sources (e.g., Traditional Chinese Medicine, Siddha, Ayurveda), but especially those, whose knowledge and practices have been orally transmitted over the centuries. Chitrakoot is well known for its beautiful hill ranges, historical caves, perennial streams and varied flora and fauna. An attempt has been made to identify folklore medicinally important plants frequently used by tribal and rural communities of temple towns of Chitrakoot district. In mythologies plants were expressed green, flourishing and delicate that its fruit was eternity and life lasting that was existence of other plants. Intensive field explorations were undertaken in 17 temple towns of Chitrakoot district during different season of 2013 to 2015. In this article, it is tried to investigate some mythological plants and related beliefs among different nations and religions. A total of 38 mythological and medicinal species belonging to 36 genera and 29 families were enumerated.

Keywords: Ethnobotany, Ethnomedicine, Mythological, Chitrakoot

I. INTRODUCTION

Chitrakoot, 'the hill of many wonders' is a place of great mythological relevance and religious importance. Chitrakuta's spiritual legacy stretches back to legendary ages: It was in these deep forests that Rama, Sita and his brother Lakshmana spent eleven and half years of their fourteen years of exile; the great sage Atri, Sat Anusuya, Dattatreya, Maharshi Markandeya, Sarbanga, Sutikshna and various other sages, seers, devotees and thinkers meditated; and here the principal trinity of the Hindu pantheon, Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, took their incarnations. Valmiki speaks of Chitrakuta as an eminently holy place inhabited by the great sages, abounding in monkeys, bears and various other kinds of fauna and flora.

India has a rich tradition of plant-based knowledge distributed amongst a vast number of ethnic groups (Anthropological survey of India, 1994). Plant have a vital role in human welfare and are continued to be valued industrial, economic, commercial and medicinal resources and some subcontinent with its wealth and variety of medicinal, many of which are even today in common uses much of which is steadily being eroded (Schulte, 1960). Plants have played an important role in many of the world's mythologies and religions, and have been given deep and sacred meanings throughout the ages. Temple towns are the tracts of virgin forest that were left untouched by the local inhabitants, harbour rich biodiversity, and are protected by the local people due to their cultural and religious beliefs and taboo that the deities reside in them. The man is using plants in various ways since existence of his life on the earth. The most ancient cross-cultural symbolic representation of the universe's construction is the world tree. The Vedas, Puranas and Epics carry special references on the mythological plants. As a result of these mythological plants are worshipped and utilized as medicine, food, fodder, fibre, dyes etc. and other useful and Harmful purposes across.

II. MATERIALS & METHODS

Chitrakoot district lies between 24°12' and 25°12'N latitude and 80°58' and 81°34'E longitude, covering in area of 1000 sq. km. The larger part is included in the district Chitrakoot of U.P. and the district Satna of M.P. Frequent ethnobotanical survey were carried out in the selected temple towns of Chitrakoot district (Table-1) inhabited by the tribals and rural of Chitrakoot district during different season of February 2013 to December 2015. Before embarking on trips the localities were carefully selected on the basis of forest based rural population.

Table – 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Places</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Ramghat</td>
<td>Situated in the bank of Mandakini river</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Kamta Nath Mandir</td>
<td>Located at the top of the Kamad giri hill</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Kamadgiri</td>
<td>5 km. parikrama path around the Kamadgiri mountain, Chitrakoot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Bharat Milap Temple</td>
<td>Located close to the Param Kutir in Parikrama Path</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Lakshman Pahari</td>
<td>Located in Parikrama Path</td>
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</table>
III. OBSERVATION & RESULT

In Indian mythology number of plants have been given medicinal value and worshipped by different cultures. Some important plants of ethnobotanical values and mythological studies have been discussed here.

A. Abrus precatorius Linn.
1) Family- Papilionaceae, Local name- Gunja
2) Mythological value- The child Krishna is inseparable from his favourite gunjaa maala, and it was said to represent Radha. Followers of Chaitanya worship Krishna in a small stone representing Mount Govardhan, with a gunja mala around it representing Radharani.
3) Medicinal use- Seeds are soaked in water for about 12 hours; eyes are washed with water extract to get relief from irritation.

B. Aegle marmelos (Linn.) Corr.
1) Family- Rutaceae, Local name- Bael
2) Mythological value- It is said that Lord Shiva is pleased by offerings of leaves from the Bael Tree, also known as bilva or bel tree. The trifoliate leaf or tripatra of the bael tree is believed to symbolize the three functions of the Lord-the creation, preservation and destruction as well as his three eyes. The offering of the leaves is a compulsory ritual while worshipping Lord Shiva all over India.
3) Medicinal use- Leaves (5-7) are grounded with water and black pepper (21) and given in the morning in empty stomach for the treatment of gastric trouble.

C. Anthocephalus cadamba (Roxb.) Miq.
1) Family- Rubiaceae, Local name- Kadamba
2) Mythological value- The Kadamba is associated with Krishna who is usually shown playing his flute under it. It is believed that when Kaliya Naga, the giant snake whose breath was so venomous that all creatures that came within a few miles of it were destroyed, inhabited the Kaliyadaha lake (before he was killed by Krishna) and the only thing that grew on a small island in the middle of the lake was the Kadamba tree.
3) Medicinal use- Leaves (5-7) are grounded with water and black pepper (21) and given in the morning in empty stomach for the treatment of gastric trouble.

D. Azadirachta indica A. Juss.
1) Family- Meliaceae, Local name- Neem
2) Mythological value- According to Hindu mythology, during the course of the event, Lord Dhanvanthari appeared from the ocean, with apot, full of nectar in the end, Lord Indira, the king of Devas tactfully snatch the pot from the Asuras and left for Deva loka. On the way, a few drops of nectar fell down on to the earth and legend has it that the Neem tree originated from the nectar.
3) Medicinal use- Leaves (7) are pasted with leaves (7) of Aegle marmelos and given in empty stomach for 15-20 days in the treatment of diabetes.

E. Bombax ceiba Linn.
1) Family- Bombacaceae, Local name- Semal
2) Mythological value- It is said that Pitamaha, the creator of the world, rested under the Semul after his labours was over. Its cup like flowers is considered sacred to Shiva. When the tree is in full bloom it is compared to Lakshmi, the goddess of good fortune, standing with her arms outstretched and a lit oil lamp on each palm.
3) Medicinal use- Powder of dried flowers with honey is given in case of excess bleeding during menstruation.
F. *Butea monosperma* (Lamk.) Taub.

1) Family- Papilionaceae, Local name- Palash/Dhak
2) Mythological value- Mentioned frequently in the Vedas, its trifoliate leaves represent the Hindu Triad, with Brahma on the left, Vishnu in the middle and Shiva on the right. In the Mahabharata, Sage Jamadagni performs a sacrifice to the gods in Palasvan, or the Palash tree grove, and the ceremony is attended by all the rivers.
3) Medicinal use- The fresh leaves are heated a bit with edible oil and tied to affected parts in cases of swelling and injury. 5 g petioles of *Butea monosperma* are ground and mixed with 10 ml leaf juice of *Tridax procumbens* 2 – 3 drops of the liquid extract is put in the opposite ear for tooth ache.

G. *Cannabis sativa* Linn.

1) Family- Cannabinaceae, Local name- Bhang
2) Mythological value- To all Hindus, the Bhang Tree is a very Holy Tree. Bhang is a popular drink made of the leaves and flowers of the Bhang tree and considered to be a "prashad". It is must for every devotee to have bhang on Mahashivratri.
3) Medicinal use- The infusion of young leaves and inflorescence is taken to cure stomach pain and flatulence.

H. *Cocos nucifera* Linn.

1) Family- Arecaceae, Local name- Narial
2) Mythological value- The coconut tree is given a special place in most Hindu households and great care is taken to nature the tree. The coconut is used for all religious purposes. Infact, it represents the main "sthapana" of any Pooja. The whole pot filled with water, mango leaves and coconut, also known as "Purnakumbha" is a symbol of Goddess Laksmi or Fortune and the coconut represents divine consciousness. To break a coconut in the beginning of any event is considered to be very auspicious. Coconuts are offered in Temples to worship to various Gods and Goddesses. The fruit is also believed to represent Lord Shiva and the three black marks on the coconut shell, symbolizes his eyes.
3) Medicinal use- Latex obtained from the leaves of *Calotropis gigantean* is filled in the endosperm of ripe, dried fruit of *Cocos nucifera* through hole. The hole is plugged with the removed piece of the fruit and the fruit is roasted in the burning cow dung. After the fruit is roasted, it is made into a powder. A teaspoonful of powder with cow milk is taken in early morning to cure Asthma.

I. *Cynodon dactylon* (Linn.) Pers.

1) Family- Poaceae, Local name- Doob Ghash.
2) Mythological value- The story mentions the appearance of a courtesan of exceptional beauty called Mohini, who in fact was Vishnu himself in disguise. Mohini carrying the vessel containing amrta was the last one to emerge out of the ocean of milk. Seeing the vessel, a fight ensued between the Devatas and the Asuras for the possession of the nectar. Mohini, however, favoured the gods and supporting the precious vessel on her hips, distributed the contents to the gods. But a few drops of it fell on earth. From the place where they fell, arose the Durva grass.
3) Medicinal use- The extractions prepared forms this plant along with garlic and warm mustard oil is rubbed on body to relieve body pain.

J. *Dendrocalamus strictus* (Roxb.) Nees.

1) Family- Poaceae, Local name- Bans
2) Mythological value- The common names of Lord Krishna- Venugopal, Bansilal, Murali and Muralidhar reflect His association with Bansuri or Venu, His constant companion. Bansuri is actually a flute made of bamboo. That is the reason; bamboo is revered in India because it is associated with Lord Krishna.
3) Medicinal use- A decoction of bamboo joints is said to increase the flow of lochia after delivery.

K. *Desmostachya bipinnata* (L.) Stap F.

1) Family- Poaceae, Local name- Kush
2) Mythological value- According to mythological tale, when Sita ji was with Valmiki ji, her son Luv ran off. Not being able to find out Luv, Valmiki created a replica of Luv out of this grass and named him Kush, This grass also served as ‘Sita-Rekha’. Sita ji put a layer of this grass between Ravana and herself when she was in Lanka, and Ravana could not cross the boundary made by this grass.
3) Medicinal use- Decoction made from leaves is used to treat fever.

L. *Diospyros melanoxylon* Roxb.

1) Family- Ebenaceae, Local name- Tendu/Biripatta
2) Mythological value- Before the battle of Lanka took place to rescue Sita, Hanuman, the monkey god was sent by Ramachandra to survey the formidable city of Lanka. Hanuman, the son of Vayu or wind, tied a piece of cloth soaked in oil...
to his tail and lighted it. Then he jumped from house top to house top, putting the city to flames. After he had jumped back to safety, he wiped his blackened hands upon the Ebony tree and since then its wood is black.

3) Medicinal use- The roots of Diospyros melanoxylon are dried under sun light and one teaspoon of decoction prepared from pounded bark is taken twice a day up to 5-7 days to gives relief from diarrhoea.

M. Emblica officinalis Gaertn. syn. Phyllanthus emblica Linn.

1) Family- Euphorbiaceae, Local name- Dhatri/Amla
2) Mythological value- Dhattrika or Dhatri which means earth or mother particularly the nursing mother, perhaps because of its nourishing juicy fruit is a tree associated with both Siva and Vishnu. In Brihaddharma Purana there is a mention about the sacredness of the tree both to Parvati and Lakshmi, the wives of Siva and Vishnu respectively. According to the legend, both the goddesses went to Prabhasa, a sacred place to worship. Parvati said to Lakshmi that she wished to worship Vishnu through a new material. Lakshmi answered that she also wished to worship Siva through a new material. At that the two goddesses wept and from their tears were created Dhatri or the Amalaki tree which both propitiated to worship Siva and Vishnu and since then the leaves of this tree are considered essential in the worship of Siva and Vishnu.
3) Medicinal use- Fresh juice of fruit, basil leaves and ginger juice is mixed in 2:2:1 proportion and taken four spoons three times a day for cold and cough.

N. Eugenia jambolana Lam.

1) Family- Myrtaceae, Local name- Jamun
2) Mythological value- The Jamun tree is considered sacred to both Krishna and Ganesha. The god of the clouds, Megha, is supposed to have been incarnated on the earth as the Jamun and that is why the colour of the fruit is that of the sky when a storm approaches.
3) Medicinal use- Extract of fruits used in typhoid fever. Fruits are eaten regularly for the treatment of stones in Kidney.
4) Seeds are dried and powered mixed with and taken before meals Diabetes.

O. Ficus benghalensis Linn.

1) Family- Moraceae, Local name- Vat/Bargad
2) Mythological value- In Hindu mythology, one famous story in the Puranas has a woman named Savitri, whose husband died as he was worshiping under a banyan tree, venturing into the realm of the dead to find him. As the story of a woman of great determination, Savitri meets Yama, the Lord of death, and wins her husband’s life back. This legend has given rise to a special puja that is done on Vat Savitri day when women fast and go round the Banyan tree.
3) Medicinal use- Fresh leaves are plucked and latex (5-7 drops) mixed with puffed sugar (Batasa) and taken for 7 days in gonorrhoea.

P. Ficus glomerata Roxb.

1) Family- Moraceae, Local name- Gular/Umar
2) Mythological value- The tree is compared to Vishnu, in fact one of the names of Vishnu is Udumbara. The seat of god Vivaswan, a vedic god worshipped at the end of the Soma sacrifice is made of its wood and the throne of king Soma is carved of its wood. The staffs of a Vaishya, at his thread ceremony is made of it. The reason why the tree seldom has any flowers is because on the Deepavali night, the gods gather on the tree and pluck all its blossoms.
3) Medicinal use- The small blister- like ‘galls’ common on the leaves, are soaked in milk and mixed with honey are given to prevent pitting in small pox. The fruit juice with honey is given to the children during dysentery.

Q. Ficus religiosa Linn.

1) Family- Moraceae, Local name- Pipal/Peepal
2) Mythological value- The tree is mentioned in the Bhagavata Gita as Aswattha or the ‘one that is not the same tomorrow’, with reference perhaps, to this world which is ever changing. It is associated with the Triad, the roots being Brahma, the stem Vishnu and the leaves Shiva. In another myth Vishnu was born under a Pipal and is therefore considered the tree itself. Some says that Lord Krishna is believed to have died under this tree, after which the present Kali Yuga started. According to another belief, Goddess Lakshmi also inhabited the tree, especially on Saturday and hence it is considered auspicious to worship it. Infact women worship the tree to bless them with a son tying red thread or red cloth around its trunk or on its branches. There is a superstitious belief that the plant gives off oxygen at night but this belief is not supported by any scientific fact.
3) Medicinal use- Thick paste of curd and boiled rice is applied over the dorsal surface of leaf of Pipal and is tied over the affected part daily till abscess is cured. Bark powder is given with lukewarm water in early morning to get relief from constipation.

R. Hibiscus rosa chinensis Linn.

1) Family- Malvaceae, Local name- Gural
2) Mythological value- A famous couplet in praise of the Sun God begins `japaa kusuma sankaasam'. The glowing complexion of the orange-skinned Hanuman is also compared to this flower. Japa flowers are used in the worship of Goddess Durga. Her glowing complexion as the Mother Goddess Lalita is compared to the Hibiscus in the lalitaopaakhyayaana.

3) Medicinal use- Powder of dried petals mixed in a cup of milk and take twice a day for anaemic patient. Boil dried flower petals in coconut oil and apply to blacken the hairs.

S. Linum usitatissimum Linn.
1) Family- Linaceae, Local name- Alsi
2) Mythological value- This pretty blue flower is popular in Sanskrit literature for comparing with the complexion of Krishna. A famous sloka in Krishna's praise goes अतसीपुष्पसंकाशम् हारनूपुरशोभितम् "atasi pushpa sankaasam haara noopura shobhitam".
3) Medicinal use- Flowers are used as cardiac tonic.

T. Mangifera indica Linn.
1) Family- Anacardiaceae, Local name- Aam
2) Mythological value- It is symbolized in Hindu mythology as a wish-granting tree and a symbol of love and devotion. Kalidasa mentions it as one of the arrows of Kama, the god of love. It is supposed to be an incarnation of Prajapati, the Lord of all creatures. Its flowers are dedicated to the moon. It is believed that Shiva married Parvati under a Mango tree. So marriage pandals are festooned with strings of Mango leaves. Mango blossoms are used on Basant Panchami day in the worship of Goddess Saraswasti.
3) Medicinal use- Powder of 20gms of leaves-boil in ½ litre water and boil it to become 125 ml filters it and drink in Cholera.

U. Musa paradisiaca Linn.
1) Family- Musaceae, Local name- Kela
2) Mythological value- The Banana plant is considered sacred to the nine forms of the Hindu goddess Kali. The trunk of banana is used to erect welcoming gates. The leaves are used to make the ceremonial pavilion. In some pooja, the leaves are used to serve "prashad". Just as leaves of bel tree are customarily offered to Lord Siva, it is believed that offering of the leaves of banana pleases Lord Ganesha. Banana as a fruit is offered to Lord Vishnu and Laksmi.
3) Medicinal use- Dry leaves are ignited and powdered then mix with honey and given with milk at morning to enhance retaining memory power in children.

V. Nelumbo nucifera Gaertn.
1) Family- Nymphaeaceae, Local name- Kamal
2) Mythological value - A famous couplet ascribed to Kalidasa describes a woman's face as a miracle of flower blooming within a flower: her beautiful eyes are like dark blue lotuses blooming in the pink lotus of her face. The goddess Lakshmi sits on a red Lotus, and Sarasvati, on a white one. The Lotus is associated with Lord Brahma, who was created sitting on a lotus arising from the navel of Lord Vishnu. The lotus has esoteric and sacred significance in spirituality. The Mother Goddess (Devi) is called Kamalamba or "Lotus Mother": she resides in a thousand-petalled lotus said to be located in the Sahasrara Chakra in the head. Raising the serpent power kundalini to this place leads to Realization, which is the aim of the practitioners of "Sri Vidya Upasana".
3) Medicinal use- The stamens are mixed with jiggery and ghee to treat haemorrhoids.

W. Nicotiana tabaccum Linn.
1) Family- Solanaceae, Local name- Tambaku
2) Mythological value - Mahadeva was a little mad from the day of his birth. Soon after he married Parvati, he came home very hungry and asked for food and Parvati was late in getting his dinner. When he kept on asking for food, Parvati thinking that he wanted to take his pleasure with her kept on smiling at him. In this way ten years passed. Then Ganesh was born but Mahadeva still does not change. He kept on asking for food and Parvati got weary of him. At last when she could not bear his persistent demands of food any longer, she went to the forest and picking up a leaf, prayed to Vanaspad, the lord of vegetation and asked him to make her husband love her. Then she came home, rolled one leaf into a pipe, powdered another leaf and filled the pipe with it and left the pipe near the food she was cooking. When Mahadeva came home and asked for food, she put a little fire into the pipe and gave it to him. Mahadeva began to smoke and soon forgot about the food and Parvati cooked the food in her own good time. Parvati then grew the plant of tobacco in her garden so that Mahadeva could have his pipe. Since then tobacco became known to mankind.
3) Medicinal uses- The leaf paste when applied on the anus causes excessive vomiting for removing food poisoning.

X. Nytanthes arbortristis Linn.
1) Family- Oleaceae, Local name- Harsinghar
2) Mythological value- According to mythology, Parijata is a heavenly tree brought to earth by lord Krishna. A quarrel over it ensued between Satyabhama and Rukmini, Krishna's wives. But Krishna planted the tree in Satyabhama's courtyard in a way that when the tree flowered, the flowers fell in Rukmini's courtyard.

3) Lord Vishnu's heavenly throne is placed under a flowering Parijata tree, and Hanuman lives under its shade.

4) Another romantic story woven around the tree is about princess Parijata who fell in love with the sun. When he deserted her she committed suicide and a tree sprung from the ashes. Unable to stand the sight of the lover who left her, the tree flowers only at night and sheds them like tear-drops before the sun rises.

5) Medicinal use- Powder of dried flowers is given to check vomiting.

Y. Nymphaea stellate Wild.

1) Family- Nymphaeaceae, Local name- Neel kamal
2) Mythological value- The dark complexion of Krishna is compared to that of Neel Kamal. For this reason, the Blue Water lily is also called Krishna Kamal.
3) In the 'Ramayana', as it goes, Rama went to 'Lanka' to rescue his abducted wife, Sita, from the grip of Ravana, the king of the Demons in Lanka. Before starting for his battle with Ravana, Rama wanted the blessings of Devi Durga. He came to know that the Goddess would be pleased only if she is worshipped with one hundred 'NeelKamal' or blue lotuses. Rama, after travelling the whole world, could gather only ninety nine of them. He finally decided to offer one of his eyes, which resembled blue lotuses. Durga, being pleased with the devotion of Rama, appeared before him and blessed him.
4) Medicinal use- Flowers are dried powdered and used as a cooling agent. Flowers with petiole are ground and bandaged on the lower abdomen for bleeding in pregnant woman.

Z. Ocimum sanctum Linn.

1) Family- Lamiaceae, Local name- Tulsi
2) Mythological value- Tulasj-tulana-nasty, ataeva tulasi i.e. nothing can equal the virtues of Tulasi is a common saying. Tulasi is the meeting point of heaven and earth. Tulasi was married to a demon called Jalandhar who was born of the sweat of Mahadeva that fell in the sea. Because of his severe austerities and penances he had been blessed by Vishnu and given a boon which made him invincible to men, gods and demons, so long as his wife was faithful to him. Tulasi or Vrinda the name by which she was known as the wife of Jalandhar, was known for her conjugal fidelity. Radha’s name is also Vrinda and the Mathura forest where Krishna played in his childhood with her is Vrindavana or the Garden of Radha or Tulsi, hence the name of Tulsi as Vrinda. Every November, the 12th day of the first half of the month Kartika, is Tulsi Divas when the plant is ceremonially married to Krishna.
3) Medicinal use- Mix leaves juice with 3 drops of juice of ginger and honey and takes 2 times in a day in jaundice. Boil decoction of leaves with cordamomun in ½ litres of water and milk and use to cure malaria. Leaves are crushed with onion bulbs; the juice is extracted and given orally to treat cough and cold.

AA. Oryza sativa Linn.

1) Family- Poaceae, Local name- Dhan
2) Mythological value- To the Hindus, Lakshmi is the goddess of wealth. Rice being the stable food of the majority of Indians, it is also associated with wealth and therefore, rice is considered as the goddess Lakshmi and is offered in all religious ceremonies. Rice is worshipped as Lakshmi on the full moon day following the Durga puja.
3) Medicinal use- The fruit is grinded with water and the paste is kept in water for some time, the supernatant is taken orally for the treatment of vomiting.

BB. Pandanus odoratissimus Linn.

1) Family- Pandanaceae, Local name- Ketaki/Kewra
2) Mythological value- Ketaki is not used in worship: it is supposedly cursed by Lord Shiva for bearing false witness of Lord Brahma. According to a Puranic legend, Vishnu and Brahma were arguing hotly as to which of them was supreme. Lord Shiva interceded, appearing amidst them in the form of a huge pillar of light. The contestants decided that the question would be settled by the one who first found the limit of this awesome cosmic pillar. Vishnu set off towards its base but was unable to find it and admitted defeat. Whereas Brahma on his journey upwards came across ketaki flower floating down slowly. Inquiring from the flower from where she had come from, ketaki replied that she had been placed at the top of the pillar of light. Unable to find the uppermost limits Brahma decided to take the flower back to Vishnu to bear witness that he had reached the top of the pillar. This infuriated Shiva. Brahma was punished for lying and the creator was banned from being worshipped. Similarly, ketaki was also cursed that she would never again be used in worship of Shiva. Thus, ketaki is debarrad forever from being offered in worship.
3) Medicinal use- An aqueous distillate of flowers called kewra water, is used for the treatment of headache and urinary retention.
**CC. Putranjiva roxburghii Wall.**
1) Family- Euphorbiaceae, Local name- Putra Kalpa Vriksha
2) Mythological value- Fruit stones are strong together to form rosaries by Hindu fakirs, Brahmins, and by parents to put around the neck of their children. These are supposed to protect the wearer from harm, hence the Sanskrit name, which signifies the life of a child.
3) Medicinal use- Stones of fruits are given in fevers.

**DD. Saccharum benghalense Retz.**
1) Family- Poaceae, Local name- Moonj/Munj
2) Mythological value- The moon is considered a deity. According to Skands Purana he is the son of Atri and Anasuiya. Buddha and became the planet mercury, the son of Moon was deposited in a clump of Munja ghas, the plant became sacred. The sacred thread of Brahmanas is made of the Munja ghas.
3) Medicinal use- The decoction of root is used in dysuria.

**EE. Santalum albam L.**
1) Family- Santalaceae, Local name- Chandan
2) Mythological value- According to legend, Lord Ganesha was created by Goddess Parvati out of sandalwood paste that she used for her bath and breathed life into the figure. Sandalwood paste is used in all religious rituals. The paste is smeared on the foreheads of devotees of Vishnu and Shiva and it is said that the sandalwood paste is meant to cool and protect the "Agna chakra" present between the eyebrows.
3) Medicinal use- Extracted oil from wood is given to patient in indigestion.

**FF. Saraca indica (Roxb.) De Wilde.**
1) Family- Caesalpiniaeae, Local name- Ashoka
2) Mythological value- The Ashoka tree gets a mention in the epic Ramayana as the "Ashoka Vatika" (garden of Ashoka trees) where Hanuman first meets Sita. Literally meaning "the "sorrowless tree", Sita spent her sorrowful days under an Ashoka tree in Ravana's garden after being abducted by him. The Hindus worship this tree because it is dedicated to "Kama Deva" (God of Love).
3) Medicinal use- Juice or paste of the flowers used in burning sensations.

**GG. Sesamum indicum Linn.**
1) Family- Pedaliaceae, Local name- Til
2) Mythological value- In the Mahabharata, Bhishma in answer to a query of Yudhisthira as to what objects dedicated to the Pitas, become inexhaustible, said: “Pitris remain gratified for the period of a month if Tila seeds and rice and barley’and Mssha (Phaseolus Roxburghii), water, roots and fruits are given at Sraddhas.
3) Medicinal use- Powder of roasted seeds mixed with cow-ghee is made into paste and applied to the paining part of the body in case of rheumatism.

**HH. Shorea robusta Gaertn. F.**
1) Family- Dipterocarpaceae, Local name- Sal/ Sakhua
2) Mythological value- To give confidence to Sugreeva and to put an end to his doubts, he suggested that Rama should demonstrate his strength. Thus approached by Lakshmana, Ramachandra bent his bow and pulling the string, shot an arrow at seven trees, of Sala standing in a row. The arrow pierced the trees and then returned to Rama’s quiver. Seeing it is miracle, Sugreeva was happy and full of confidence at Ramachandra’s ability to slay Vaali. Since this was no ordinary feat, Sugreeva was convinced that Ramachandra was no ordinary mortal. From that day Sala tree was associated with Vishnu as Ramachandra wai his incarnation and it is held sacred by Hindus.
3) Medicinal use- Resin with mustard oil is externally applied for relieving pain in any part of the body.

**II. Tamarindus indica Linn.**
1) Family- Caesalpiniaeae, Local name- Iml
2) Mythological value- During the rainy season, Sita was cooking the food under a Tintrini tree but the rain kept on coming through the leaves and putting out the fire. Ramachandra was enraged at this and ordered Lakshmana, his younger brother to send a letter of protest to Lord Indra, the god of rain asking him to stop the rain. Lakshmana tied the letter of protest to an arrow and shot it at the heavens. The rain subsequently stopped but the arrow as it went passed the leaves, split them into shreds and since that time they have remained small and divided.
3) Medicinal use- Bruised fresh leaves with lemon juice are applied in inflammatory swellings.

**JJ. Tectona grandis (Linn.) F.**
1) Family- Verbenaceae, Local name- Sagun/Saigun
Based on the present study, it has been found that the tribal/rural community of Chitrakoot is rich in ethnomedicinal knowledge, which has been transmitted from one generation to another. The present study also revealed that the local people living in the same region have their own traditional mythological knowledge. The present study emphasized that there is a profound and growing knowledge gap between old and younger generations. People of more than 50-65 years age know a lot about wild plant products as compared to younger generation (Pandey and Bisaria, 1997).

The medicinal plants provide numerous opportunities for the state to advance rural well-being. Because medicinal plants are one of the few natural products that sell at premium prices. Thus, the global glamour for more herbal ingredients creates possibilities for the commercial cultivation of medicinal crops. Such endeavours could help raise rural employment in the developing countries, boost commerce around the world, and perhaps contribute to the health of millions. The rural of the region are still collecting gums, leaves, bark, flowers and fruits of various medicinal plants to supplement their income.

The knowledge gathered from the study can thus be exploited in arousing the general masses to conserve the natural wealth of bio resources in the region before they fall prey to deforestation. Thus there is an immediate need for documentation of the same for the greater benefit of the future generation. These studies of ethnomedicinal aspects will be useful for further researches in the field of pharmacology, phytochemistry and pharmaceutical chemistry.

REFERENCES