



**Ethnomedicinal Plants Used By Kokni Tribal In Touch Therapy Of Nasik,
Dhule And Nandurbar Districts Of Maharashtra State**

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Abstract:

The paper deals with the study of ethnomedicinal plant species used in touch therapy by the Kokni tribe in the treatment of various diseases. Touch therapy, where locally available plants, plant parts are made to touch a specific part of the human body by a tribal medicine man, is one of the practices of the Kokni tribe of Nasik, Dhule and Nandurbar districts. . This article discusses such ethnomedicinal plants used in touch therapy. It also highlights the opportunity for further research on its impact and the constructive scientific application of this traditional knowledge in the region and across our country. The Kokni tribes are highly civilized and deeply believe in the supernatural powers of certain wild plants associated with taboos, protection from evil forces and protection from various diseases. Different parts of plants like roots, stems, leaves, fruits, seeds etc. are used to treat various diseases using touch therapy. The Kokni tribe practices touch therapy which is based mainly on magico-religious beliefs. In total, 23 plant species are used in the touch therapy by the Kokni tribe from the study area.

Key Words: Kokni, Touch Therapy, Nasik, Dhule, Nandurbar, Maharashtra.

Introduction:

One of the most popular tribal techniques, touch therapy is used to cure a variety of illnesses in the Kokni tribal culture. The Kokni tribes transmit this information verbally from generation to generation and believe in using their own medicine. In touch treatment, a portion of the medicinal plant is wrapped around the wrist, chest, belly, or neck, or it can be

connected to other body parts and applied to the ill body. Touch therapy is used to treat a variety of illnesses, including those that make childbirth easier or less painful, postpartum care, abortion, prevention of abortion, prevention of minor body swellings, jaundice, fever, headache relief, rheumatic pain relief, and childhood colds and coughs. Many ethnic and rural communities across the world still use

touch therapy as a traditional form of healing. In this age-old custom, the whole plant or a portion of it is applied topically to the afflicted area of skin, and many common maladies are magically healed. A member of an established rural and ethnic group hangs a garland around their neck or wears a plant, or portions of it, around their arm. Following the treatment, patients experience alleviation from a particular illness. The enchanting outcome could result from the plant part releasing specific phytochemicals when in contact with the patient. As touch therapy is rare among the modern population, there has been limited research conducted on this ancient medical practice. This data will uncover additional plants utilized by Kokni tribe in the study area for touch therapy for healing different ailments.

Materials and Methods:

Several ethnobotanical field surveys were conducted between 2021 and 2023 in

various Kokni tribal villages located in Nasik and Dhule districts of Maharashtra. Plant samples were gathered from various villages during the field survey and their uses were documented. Images of the plants were captured digitally, and specimens were gathered to authenticate and create herbarium sheets. The plant samples were recognized using the appropriate botanical guides. The new samples were cross-referenced with previously gathered herbarium specimens at Blatter herbarium, located at St. Xavier's College (Autonomous) in Mumbai, Maharashtra, for verification. The GPS coordinates of the samples collected were also documented for future reference.

Observations:

The information about the uses of plants used in touch therapy is given in the table followed by Botanical name, local name, family and uses of the plants.

Sr. No.	Botanical name	Local Name	Family	Uses
1.	<i>Abelmoschus manihot</i> (L.) Medik	Ranbhendi	Malvaceae	The root pieces are tied in black thread and hung around neck to cure Jaundice
2.	<i>Abrus precatorius</i> L	Gunj	Fabaceae	The roots is tied around the navel of a pregnant woman to facilitate child birth and reduce labor pain.
3.	<i>Abutilon indicum</i> (L.) Sweet	Khapat	Malvaceae	Roots are tied around waist of pregnant women for easy delivery.

4.	<i>Argemone mexicana</i> L.	Piwala Dhotra	Papaveraceae	The roots are wrapped around the wrist of small children to stop loose motions. Root is knotted into the hair of pregnant women to help them cope with the pain of labour.
5.	<i>Asparagus racemosus</i> Willd	Shatavari	Liliaceae	Roots are tied around ear to cure Vertigo.
6.	<i>Careya arborea</i> Roxb.	Kumbhi	Lecythidaceae	Stem is wrapped around the waist of small children to stop loose motions.
7.	<i>Cuscuta reflexa</i> Roxb.	Amarvel	Cuscutaceae	Stem is wrapped around neck to cure Jaundice.
8.	<i>Datura innoxia</i> Mill.	Dhotra	Solanaceae	The root pieces are kept in the navel of woman for easy delivery and reduce labor pain.
9.	<i>Echinops echinatus</i> Roxb.	Utkattya	Asteraceae	A small piece of root is tied in the hair of expectant mother at the time of delivery to induce labor pain. The root piece is removed immediately after delivery.
10.	<i>Enicostema axillare</i> (Poir.ex Lam.) A. Raynal	Kadvya	Gentianaceae	The leaves of the plant are tied on arm to cure high grade fever.
11.	<i>Garuga pinnata</i> Roxb.	Kakod	Burseraceae	Bark is tied with cloth for contusion.
12.	<i>Gloriosa superba</i> L.	Kal Lawi	Liliaceae	Stem pieces is tied around the waist to facilitate delivery.
13.	<i>Haldina cordifolia</i> (Roxb.) Ridsdale	Haldu	Rubiaceae	To treat stomach ache, the leaves are warmed and tied around the stomach.
14.	<i>Hemidesmus indicus</i> (L.) R. Br. ex Schultes	Anantmul	Periplocaceae	Piece of root is tied around ear to reduce high fever.
15.	<i>Leucas aspera</i> (Willd.) Link	Bondala	Asteraceae	Root pieces in a black thread are tied around neck to reduce cough and cold.
16.	<i>Plumbago zeylanica</i> L.	Chitruk	Plumbaginaceae	Root is tied on wrist to reduce fever and cough.

17.	<i>Portulaca oleracea</i> L.	Bam	Portulacaceae	Leaves are boiled with water and tied with a cloth to cure muscular pain.
18.	<i>Ricinus communis</i> L.	Divji	Euphorbiaceae	Leaves are warmed and tied on chest and legs to reduce pain.
19.	<i>Semecarpus anacardium</i> L.f.	Bibba	Anacardiaceae	Seeds are tied along the waist to cure leprosy.
20.	<i>Terminalia arjuna</i> (Roxb. ex DC.) Wight & Arn	Arjun	Combretaceae	Root is tied around the waist to reduce fever.
21.	<i>Tinospora sinensis</i> (Lour.) Merr	Ghamuli	Menispermaceae	The entire plant is tied around neck to cure heat rash and fever.
22.	<i>Vitex negundo</i> L.	Nirgudi	Verbenaceae	The leaves are heated and tied to reduce body pains and swelling of muscles.
23.	<i>Xanthium strumarium</i> L.	Lepadi	Asteraceae	Fruits are hung around the ear to cure headache.

Results and Discussion:

Touch therapy stands out as a distinctive, natural, and completely safe healthcare practice, with no known contraindications. As a result, Touch therapy garners interest from the local community and ethnobotanists, who are eager to record this traditional knowledge for future reference and to promote the beneficial therapeutic properties of these wild plants. Touch therapy is included in this traditional knowledge, using a portion of a locally accessible medicinal plant that is placed in superficial contact with the body. It can be either worn around the patient's neck or tied to other body parts. Diseases that are primarily treated with

contact therapy include easy deliveries, complications after delivery, abortions, preventing miscarriages, jaundice, fever, headache relief and reduction of rheumatic pain.

There are a total of 23 plants that the ethnic group under study is known to use. A small number of treatment methods are highly novel and distinctive to developed societies; these are suggested for further investigation in various pharmacopoeia. The target group of the study area was found to have extensive knowledge about the medicinal uses of the nearby plants in the current investigation. The majority of traditional knowledge is derived from ethical practices that have

been practiced for generations through repeated trial and error methods. All of these age-old methods are simple, secure, economical, and have a wide range of applications against a variety of human illnesses. During the field trips, a clear hierarchy in the transmission of traditional knowledge from elders to younger generations was observed. It is imperative that we preserve and record this generation's ancient ethical knowledge before it is lost to one or more causes, such as the untimely death of the old medicine man, the overexploitation of wild plants, or the disinterested younger tribal generation.

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