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**IMPACT OF ETHNOMEDICINAL DIVERSITY OF CHOSEN SPECIES OF  
ANGIOSPERM FROM GORAKHPUR (U.P), INDIA**

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**ABSTRACT**

An ethnobotanical survey was conducted to collect information about medicinal plants used by villagers located in the forest area of Gorakhpur and adjacent areas. Information's presented in this paper were gathered from localities informants including practitioners using an integrated approach of botanical collections and interview schedules. A total of 40 informants within the age group of 30 to 68 were interviewed, among them two were tribal practitioners. About 49 ethnomedicinal plant species distributed across 29 families have been documented in the present study. Results indicate that fresh plant materials were invariably preferred for treating ailments. Information's reveal that localities of Gorakhpur near the forest and adjacent area is still largely depending on medicinal plants to meet their primary healthcare needs. They use ethnomedicinal plants to treat ailments like cold, cough, fever, headache, stomachache, diarrhea, dysentery, skin diseases, poison bites, cut or wounds and diabetes. Medicinal plants used by have been listed along with plant parts used with its ethnomedicinal significance.

**KEYWORDS:** Ethnomedicine; Traditional knowledge; Medicinal plants. Gorakhpur District



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## INTRODUCTION

People living in villages and far-flung areas depend completely on forest resources for maintaining their day-to-day needs like medicine, food, fuel and household articles. In the last 2000 years of the history of medicine, we can see that for most of this period, mankind had no other source of medicine than plants, either fresh or dried. Traditional medical knowledge is important not only for its potential contribution to drug development and market values, but also for the people's healthcare.

Ethnomedicine refers to the study of traditional medical practice which is concerned with the cultural interpretation of health, diseases and illness and also addresses the health care seeking process and healing practices. The practice of ethnomedicine is a complex multi-disciplinary system constituting the use of plants, spirituality and the natural environment and has been the source of healing for people for millennia

Research interest and activities in the area of ethnomedicine have increased tremendously in the last decade. Since the inception of the discipline, scientific research in ethnomedicine has made important contribution

to the understanding of traditional subsistence, medical knowledge and practice. The explosion of the ethnomedicine literature has been stimulated by an increased awareness of the consequences of the forced displacement and/or acculturation of indigenous people, the recognition of indigenous health concepts as a means of maintaining ethnic identities, the search for new medical treatments and technologies. The components of ethnomedicine have long been ignored by many biomedical practitioners for various reasons. For example, the chemical composition, dosages and toxicity of the plants used in ethnomedicine are not clearly defined. However, it is interesting to note that the ethnomedicinal uses of plants is one of the most successful criteria used by the pharmaceutical industry in finding new therapeutic agents for the various fields of biomedicine .

A study of WHO depicts that over 80% of world's population directly depends on the natural diversity and its associated traditional system of medicine for their primary healthcare demands (WHO, 2000). Though, traditional medical practices are empirical in nature, it has been estimated that over 200 million people in



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India with limited access to the organized primary healthcare service centers, depend on varietal aspects of traditional system of medicine to cater to their health care needs (Farnsworth, 1998). India holds a global credibility of having diverse social, cultural and regional convention of indigenous medical heritage with an unbroken tradition coming down across millennia. Though, medical heritage of such a kind is quite a few centuries old, several million people in rural/ remote places in this subcontinent still depend on traditional system of medicine to satisfy their healthcare demands (Jain, 1967).

Several studies have revealed that tribal population in remote area, not only depend on plant based resources for medicines, food, forage and fuel, but also play a vital role in the management natural resources (Ignacimuthu et al., 2006; Ragupathy et al., 2008; Ragupathy and Newmaster, 2009). Local communities meet their healthcare needs by using non-timber minor forest produces and preparations based on traditional knowledge. Further, it has been established that herbal drugs obtained from plants are safe with few side effects in treating various ailments.

The main objective of this study was to assess the diversity of ethnomedicinal plants used by localities of Gorakhpur District (U.P) and document the traditional medical practices followed in, healing ailments. Therefore, documenting indigenous knowledge through ethnobotanical studies is important for the conservation of biological resources and their sustainable utilization.

### STUDY SITE

The study site was Gorakhpur city which is located in the Terai belt of Eastern Uttar Pradesh in India. It lies between Lat. 26°13'N and 27°29'N and Long. 83°05'E and 83°56'E. The city is situated in the plain of Saryu of mid Gangetic valley and at the confluence of Rapti and Rohini River.



Courtesy: Map of India



## MATERIALS AND METHODS

Several field surveys were conducted during 2013-2015 in the different places of Gorakhpur city. Information was collected through personal interviews with the local people of different age group. The plants specimens collected during the field trips have been identified with the help of published literature and herbaria of different institutes in the area. The identified herbarium specimens have been deposited in the herbarium of St. Andrew's P.G. College Gorakhpur U.P.

## ENUMERATION

Ethnomedicinal plant species collected from forests of Gorakhpur division and adjacent areas are enumerated here alphabetically along with local name and their ethnomedicinal uses.

### ➤ WEEDS:-

#### 1. *Amaranthus viridis* Linn.

Local Name: Surrma.

Family: Amaranthaceae

Part(S) Used: branches and leaves.

Folk Medicinal Uses It is a fodder of cattle and it is also used as Sag, Leaves are used as emollient. It is also used as anti helminthes.

#### 2. *Achyranthes aspera* Linn.

Local Name: Chirchitta

Family Name: Amaranthaceae

Part(S) used: Whole Plant

Medicinal Property: Abdominal pains, Ascites, Blood diseases, Bronchitis, Carminative & Useful in treatment of Vomiting, Cough, Dysentery, Dyspepsia, heart Disease, Heating, Laxative, Leprosy, Mouth sores, Toothache.

#### 3. *Argemone maxicana* Linn.

Local Name: Pelicateli

Family Name: Papaveraceae

Part(S) used: Root, Latex

Medicinal Property: All types of Poisoning, Colic, Constipation, Diarrhea, Dysentery, Fever, Flatulence, Guinea-worm infestation, Inflammations, Itching, Piles, Skin disease, Vesicular calculus.

#### 4. *Acalypha indica* Linn.

Local Name: 'Kuppi'

Family Name: Euphorbiaceae

Part(S) used: Whole plant

Medicinal Property: useful in bronchitis asthma, pneumonia and rheumatism.

#### 5. *Adhatoda vasica* Nees

Local Name: 'Adusa'

Family Name: Acanthaceae

Part(S) used: Leaves

Medicinal Property: Juice of the leaves is an expectorant. It softens the thick sputum and thus bring about quick relief in bronchitis. Leaves are used in packing or storing fruits as they are not easily attacked by fungi and insects. They are also utilized for obtaining a yellow dye.

#### 6. *Amaranthus spinosus* Linn.

Local Name: 'Kateli Chourai'

Family Name: Amaranthaceae

Part(S) used: Root, Leaves

Medicinal Property: Roots is externally used in eczema.



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**7. *Bacopa monnieri* Linn.**

Local Name: 'Jalneem'

Family Name: Scrophulariaceae

Part(S) used: Leaves

Medicinal Property: Leaves are taken in chronic fever and also to improve memory and as a tonic for nervous disorder.

**8. *Barleria prionitis* Linn**

Local Name: Vajradanti

Family Name: Acanthaceae

Part(S) used: Root and leaves

Medicinal Property: Used in Abdominal disorder, Fever, Rheumatic pain, cough, Dropsy, Paralysis and Swelling

**9. *Boerhaavia diffusa* Linn.**

Local Name: Gajpurna

Family Name: Nyctaginaceae

Part(S) used: Fresh whole plant, Root, Leaves and flower

Medicinal Property: Used in Asthma, Anaemia, Jaundice, Snake venome, Epilepsy, heart disease and Cough Bronchitis.

**10. *Cassia tora* Linn.**

Local Name: Chakwad

Family Name: Caesalpiniaceae

Part(S) used: Seed

Medicinal Property: Leucoderma, Leprosy, Ring worm, cough and eczema.

**11. *Calotropis procera* (Ait.) Dry.**

Local Name: Madar

Family Name: Asclepiadaceae

Part(S) used: Latex, Root

Medicinal Property: Anti-microbial activities, Asthma, Blood impurity, Bronchitis, Cough, Cold, Diarrhoea, Eczema, Fever, Filariasis, Glandular swellings, Joint Pain, Indigestion, Leprosy, Paralysis, Skin inflammations, Smallpox, Sores, Syphilis, Rheumatism, Toothaches, Wounds.

**12. *Catharanthus roseus* (L.) G.Don**

Local Name: Sadabahar

Family Name: Apocynaceae

Part(S) used: Leaves, Flower, Root

Medicinal Property: Anti-Cancer, Asthma, Diabetes, Dysentery, Dyspepsia, High blood Pressure, Leukemia, Low blood pressure, Lymphoma, Menorrhagia, Malaria, Purgative, Toothache.

**13. *Clerodendron inerme* Linn**

Local Name: Bhatwas

Family Name: Verbenaceae

Part(S) used: Whole plant, Root and leaves

Medicinal Property: Used in Remittent fever and Rheumatism.

**14. *Cyprus rotandus* Linn.**

Local Name: Motha

Family Name: Cyperaceae

Part(S) used: Whole plant

Medicinal Property: Used in skin disease, blood purifier.

**15. *Cynadon dactylon* (L.) Pers**

Local Name: Doob

Family Name: Poaceae

Part(S) used: Leaves

Medicinal Property: Antidiabetic, Asthma, Brain tonic, Bronchitis, Carminative, Dysentery, Eye Disorders, Eczema, Fever, Heart tonic, Increasing the number of Red Blood cells, Leprosy, Leucoderma, Piles, Toothache, Tumors, Skin Diseases.

**16. *Datura alba* Linn.**

Local Name: Datura

Family Name: Solanaceae

Part(S) used: Seed

Medicinal Property: Asthma, Hemorrhoids, Muscle spasm, Rheumatism, Skin ulcer, Whooping cough



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**17. *Datura stramonium* Linn.**

Local Name: Duk  
Family Name: Solanaceae  
Part(S) used: Seed, Root  
Medicinal Property: Ache, Anemia, Asthma, Boils, Fever, Headache, Glaucoma, Motion sickness, Rattlesnake bites, Respiratory tract, Sores, Sprains, Swellings, Toothache, Tumors, Urinary difficulties, Urinary tract.

**18. *Eclipta prostrata* Linn.**

Local Name: Bhringraj  
Family Name: Asteraceae  
Part(S) used : Whole plant  
Medicinal Property: Used in fever, leucoderma and liver disorder.

**19. *Euphorbia hirta* Linn.**

Local Name: Dudhi  
Family Name: Euphorbiaceae  
Part(S) used: Whole Plant  
Medicinal Property: Antibacterial, Antiviral, Asthma, Boils, Bronchitis, Cough, Diarrhea, Dengue, Digestive problems, Dysentery, Fever, Gonorrhoea, Jaundice, Pimples, Snakebite, Syphilis, Tumors, Wounds.

**20. *Lantana camara* Linn.**

Local Name: Ghaneri  
Family Name: Verbenaceae  
Part(S) used: Whole plant  
Medicinal Property: Healing of wounds, Malaria and Snakebite.

**21. *Oxalis corniculata* Linn.**

Local Name: Amrul  
Family Name: Oxalidaceae  
Part(S) used: Whole plant  
Medicinal Property: Antibacterial, Antifungal, Anthelmintic, Cold fever, Diarrhea, Diuretic, Dysentery, Insect bites, Skin eczema, Snake bite, Sprains

**22. *Ricinus communis* Linn.**

Local Name: Arand  
Family Name: Euphorbiaceae  
Part(S) used: Seeds, leaves  
Medicinal Property: Antifungal, Boils, Colic, Dysentery, Fever, Gout, Growth of hair, Hydrocele, Itchiness, Leprosy, Nerve pain, Pain, Piles, Rheumatism, Sores, Swellings, Treating colds, Tumors, Warts, Wounds

**23. *Solanum nigrum* Linn.**

Local Name: Makoi  
Family Name: Solanaceae  
Family Name: Whole plant, Leaves and Fruit  
Medicinal Property: Used in Fever, Diarrhoea, Piles, Skin disease, Heart disease, Dropsy and Eye trouble.

**24. *Solanum xanthocarpum* Linn.**

Local Name: Kantakari  
Family Name: Solanaceae  
Part(S) used: Whole plant  
Medicinal Property: Antioxidant, Asthma, Bronchitis, Cardio tonic, Chest pain, Cough, Diuretic, Fever, Gonorrhoea, Jaundice, Skin diseases, Toothache, Tuberculosis, Ulcers.

**25. *Sida cardifolia* Linn.**

Local Name: Bariyar  
Family Name: Malvaceae  
Family Name: Root, Leaves, Seed  
Medicinal Property: Used in Gonorrhoea, Nervous and Urinary diseases, Bleeding piles and Leucorrhoea.

**26. *Tridax procumbense* Linn.**

Local Name: Coat Buttan  
Family Name: Asteraceae  
Part(S) used: Leaves, Stem and Juice  
Medicinal Property: Used in treatment of cuts and wound and intestinal worm.

**27. *Withania somnifera* Linn.**

Local Name: Ashwagandha  
Family Name: Solanaceae  
Part(S) used: Root  
Medicinal Property: Anti-tumor, Arthritis, Asthma, Cold & Cough, Conjunctivitis, Diabetes, Diuretic, Epilepsy, Insomnia, Intestinal infections, Leprosy, Nervous Disorders, Tubercular glands, Tumors, Ulcer.

**➤ TREES****1. *Acacia nilotica* (L.) delile**

Local Name: Babul  
Family Name: Mimosaceae  
Part(S) used: Bark, leaves, Seed  
Medicinal Property: Antibacteria, Antifungal, Antiviral, Abscess, Burn, Cough, Dental care, Diarrhea, Gonorrhoea, Leucoderma, Malaria, Mouth sores, Pneumonia, Skin crack, Skin diseases, Small pox, Toothache, Weakness

**2. *Agave americana* Linn.**

Local Name: Kantala  
Family Name: Agavaceae  
Part(S) used: Leaves  
Medicinal Property: Antiseptic, Diarrhea, Diuretic, Dysentery, Flatulence, Gonorrhoea, Hydrophobia, Jaundice, Snake bites, Stomachic, Toothache, Venereal disease, Wounds.

**3. *Azadirachta indica* A. juss**

Local Name: Neem  
Family Name: Meliaceae  
Part(S) used: Leaves, bark  
Medicinal Property: Anthelmintic, Antifungal, Antibacterial, Antiviral, Antiseptic, Asthma, Chicken pox, Contraceptive, Cosmetics uses, Cough, Diabetes, Eye Disorders, Fever, Healthy hair, Leprosy, Malaria, Pain, Sedative, Skin diseases, Toothbrush, Tongue cleaner, Urinary disorders, Ulcer, Wounds.

**4. *Bambusa spinosa* Roxb.**

Local Name: Bans  
Family Name: Poaceae  
Part(S) used: Whole plant  
Medicinal Property: Anthelmintic, Aphrodisiac, Aromatic, Astringent, Diaphoretic, Diarrhoea, Diuretic, Emollient, Emmenagogue, Leprosy, Tonic

**5. *Butea monosperma* (Lam.) Kuntz.**

Local Name: Palas  
Family Name: Papilionaceae  
Part(S) used: Whole plant  
Medicinal Property: Bleeding piles, Diabetes, Diarrhea, Dysentery, Eczema, Hemorrhages, Infusion, Leucorrhoea, Pimples, Ringworms, Skin ulcers, Sores, Swellings, Vaginal disease.

**6. *Carica papaya* Linn.**

Local Name: Papita  
Family Name: Caricaceae  
Part(S) used: Fruit, seed  
Medicinal Property: Abdominal disorders, Amenorrhoea, Atherosclerosis, Cancer, Dengue Fever, Diabetic, Diarrhoea, Dysentery, Dyspepsia, Heart attacks, Heart Disease, High blood pressure, Hyperacidity, Malaria, Strokes, Wounds

**7. *Cassia fistula* Linn.**

Local Name: Amaltas  
Family Name: Caesalpiniaceae  
Part(S) used: Fruit, leaves, root-bark, stem-bark  
Medicinal Property: Antioxidant, Blood sugar, Blood purification, Cold, Cough, Diabetes, Fever, Leprosy, Pyoderma, Ringworm, Skin disease, Ulcer, Wounds

**8. *Citrus medica* salib.**

Local Name: Bara nimbu  
Family Name: Rutaceae  
Part(S) used: Fruit, leaves



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Medicinal Property: Anticancer, Anorexia, Asthma, Cooling, Constipation, Diarrhea, Dysentery, Dysmenorrhea, Fever, Halitosis, Headaches, Hemorrhoids, Intestinal disorders, Jaundice, Piles, Pulmonary, Seasickness, Skin Diseases, Tumors, Vomiting, Worm infestations.

**9. *Dalbergia sissoo* Roxb.**

Local Name: Shisham

Family Name: Fabaceae

Part(S) used: Leaves, Root

Medicinal Property : Anthelmintic, Antipyretic, Aphrodisiac, Blood diseases, Boils, Dysentery, Dyspepsia, Gonorrhea, Leprosy, Leucoderma, Nausea, Refrigerant, Scabies, Skin diseases, Stimulant, Stomach problem, Syphilis.

**10. *Emblica officinalis* Linn.**

Local Name: Amla

Family Name: Euphorbiaceae

Part(S) used: Fruit, Seed, bark

Medicinal Property : Antimicrobial, Antioxidant, Anti-ulcer, Asthma, Boils, Chicken pox, Chronic fever, Chronic headache, Cooling, Cough & Cold, Diabetes, Dysentery, Dyspepsia, Eruptions, Hair care, Hair loss, High blood pressure, Impure blood, Jaundice, Loose motions, Migraine, Nose bleeding, Piles, Pimples, Poisonous insect bites.

**11. *Eucalyptus citriodora* Labill.**

Local Name: Eucalyptus

Family Name: Myrtaceae

Part(S) used: Leaves

Medicinal Property : Antibacterial, Anticancer, Antiperspirant, Antirheumatic, Antiseptic, Allergies, Back pain, Bronchitis, Colds sores, Cuts & wounds, Diaphoretic, Facial care, Flu, Pain relief, Sore throat, Ulcers.

**12. *Ficus bengalensis* Linn.**

Local Name: Bargad

Family Name: Moraceae

Part(S) used: Bark, seed, latex

Medicinal Property: Biliousness, Cholera, Dysentery, Erysipelas, Fever, Gonorrhea, Inflammations of liver, Leprosy, Mouth sores, Noise-disease, Piles, Skin diseases, Syphilis, Vaginal complains, Vomiting, Vulerary, Ulcers.

**13. *Ficus religiosa* Linn.**

Local Name: Pipal

Family Name: Moraceae

Part(S) used: Seed, latex, Bark

Medicinal Property: Asthma, Boils, Bruises, Cardiac weakness, Diabetes, Diarrhea, Epilepsy, Gastric problems, Gonorrhea, Inflammatory disorders, Infectious, Jaundice, Mumps, Neck problems, Sexual disorders, Swollen Lymphatic gland, Ulcers, Wounds.

**14. *Lawsonia inermis* Linn.**

Local Name: Henna

Family Name: Lythraceae

Part(S) used: Leaves, Root, Flower

Medicinal Property : Anemia, Antiparasitic, Burning sensation, Dysmenorrhea, Graying of Hair, Hair fall, Edema, Headache, Hepatitis, Leprosy, Pain, Pitta, Skin diseases, Tuberculostatic, Ulcers.

**15. *Madhuca indica* (Koenig.) macbride**

Local Name: Mahua

Family Name: Sapotaceae

Part(S) used: Flower, leaves, bark & seeds

Medicinal Property : Anticancer, Antimicrobial, Antioxidant, Arthritis, colds, diabetes, Painkiller, Skin diseases, Snake-bite, Ulcers.

**16. *Mangifera indica* Linn.**

Local Name: Aam

Family Name: Anacardiaceae



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Part(S) used: Fruit, seed, root, leaves  
Medicinal Property: Ant allergic, Antibacterial, Anti diabetic, Anti parasitic, Antitumor, Anti Viral, Colic, Diarrhea, Dysentery, Gastroprotective, Glossitis, Hepatoprotective, Hypolipidmic, Immunomodulation, Liver disorders, Snakebite, Stings, Tympanitis

**17. *Melia azedarach* Linn.**

Local Name: Bakain  
Family Name: Meliaceae  
Part(S) used: Root, bark  
Medicinal Property: Amenorrhea, Burning sensation, Cough, Diabetes, Fever, Headache, Leprosy, Lumbago, Rheumatism, Sciatica, Scrofula, Urinary tract Infection, Ulcer, Vata, Wounds, Vomiting.

**18. *Morus alba* Linn.**

Local Name: Sahatuta  
Family Name: Moraceae  
Part(S) used: Fruit, bark  
Medicinal Property: Antibacterial, Astringent, Colds, Diabetes, Diaphoretic, dyspepsia, Eye Infections, Fever, Flu, Hypertension, Hypoglycaemic, Odontalgic, Ophthalmic, Sore throat, Tinnitus, Urinary incontinence.

**19. *Musa paradisiaca* Linn.**

Local Name: Kella  
Family Name: Musaceae  
Part(S) used: Whole plant  
Medicinal Property: Anemia, Brain power, Depression, Diabetes, Diarrhea, Dysentery, Colic  
Diseases, Energy booster, High blood pressure, Immunity booster, Kidney health, Ulcers, Worm.

**20. *Tamarindus indica* Linn.**

Local Name: Imli  
Family Name: Caesalpiniaceae  
Part(S) used: Fruit, Bank

Medicinal Property: Bilious, Burns, Cough, Diabetes, Digestive disorders, Dysentery, Fever, Jaundice, Malaria, Piles, Scurvy, Sore, Throats, Ulcers.

**21. *Terminalia arjuna* (Roxb, exDC.)**

Local Name: Arjun  
Family Name: Combretaceae  
Part(S) used: Bark  
Medicinal Property: Angina, Anti-inflammatory, Anti-oxidant, Asthma, Dysentery, ear -ache, Heart failure, Hypercholesterolemia, Hypertension.

**22. *Zizphus jujuba* Linn.**

Local Name: Ber  
Family Name: Rhamnaceae  
Part(S) used: Fruit  
Medicinal Property: Antipyretic, Asthma, Bronchitis, Diarrhoea, Diuretic, Eye disease, Fever, Increase physical stamina, Liver disorders, Purify blood, Ulcer, Wounds.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The present study revealed the ethnobotanical knowledge of local people of Gorakhpur district, Uttar Pradesh. In the following medicinal details of identified plants with alphabetical order, followed by local name, family name, part used and medicinal properties. The local people used mostly plants are belonging to different families viz- Caesalpiniaceae, Euphorbiaceae, Fabaceae, Malvaceae, Meliaceae, Mimosaceae, Moraceae, Poaceae Solanaceae and Zingiberaceae. Among different plant parts used by this people, the



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leaves are used most frequently to cure wounds and they applied mostly on the external surface of the body. Generally fresh part of the plant can be used for the preparation of medicine. When it is not in available condition the dried leaves or roots are also used. The result of this investigation showed that these local people of Gorakhpur district still depend on medicinal uses of plants for the treatment of anthelmintic, alexeteric, cough, dysentery, dyspepsia, eczema, eye disease, fever, glaucoma, gonnorrhoea, headache, high blood pressure, insomnia, intestinal infections, jaundice, low blood pressure, liver disorders, menstrual disorders, mouthwash, nervous disorders, purify blood, pain, piles, rheumatism, respiratory tract, skin disease, snake bites, small pox, whooping cough, urinary tract and many types of diseases.

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