

REVIEW OF RESEARCH

An International Multidisciplinary Peer Reviewed & Refereed Journal

Impact Factor: 5.2331

UGC Approved Journal No. 48514

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HERBAL MEDICAL USAGE AMONG AGRICULTURAL WOMEN LABOURS: HEALTH AND ECONOMIC STUDY

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ABSTRACT: -

Medicinal plants the world's oldest known health care products, play a key role in traditional medicine. But these plants are not only used for primary health care; many widely used pharmaceuticals are derived from plants and other natural sources. Traditional



medicine is used the world over but is particularly relied on in developing countries. The present study aims to assess the Herbal Medicine Socio-Economic status of Agricultural women labour, Herbal Awareness of Agricultural women labour, and Herbal Medicinal usage and Practice, corresponding to selective diseases of

Srirangapatna taluk in Mandya District. The findings revealed that, about 66.66% of agricultural women labours felt that herbal medicine plays a vital role in socio-economic status; 73.33% out of the total number of them have agreed that attack of common diseases i.e., cold, cough, fever, headache and stomachache can be cured both for adult and children by herbal medicine only and Majority of all the agricultural women labour for the present study were aware about herbal medicine and used for selected diseases.

KEYWORDS: Herbal Medicine, Agriculture, Women Labour.

INTRODUCTION :

India has a century's old heritage of medicinal plants and herbal medicines for alleviating ailments and promotion of health and happiness. The traditional systems of medicine are being practiced to achieve the good health along with many indigenous methods. Ethno medicine or the folk medicine is one of the ways, which is widely practiced among the rural and aboriginal population of our country for treating ailments. All traditional systems of medicine had their root and origin in folklore medicine and even today, larger number of rural and tribal populations adopts herbal remedies for primary health care.

All the plants on the earth are important for humanity as human beings are influenced in various ways by plants and their products. Existence of mankind's impossible without plant kingdom as they provide balanced ecosystem, major source of nutrition, preventive aspects of medicine, primitive aspects of health and curative aspect of disease. The World Health Organization (WHO) has estimated that 80 % of the people in the developing countries of the world rely on traditional medicines and 85 % of the traditional medicines involve the use of plant extracts. Ayurvedic records over 8000 herbal remedies. India officially recognizes over 2500 plants as having medicinal value and it has been estimated that over 6000 plants are used in traditional, folk and herbal medicines. Our traditional practice of herbal medicine is the women agricultural labours actively involve for health care and economic development.

NEED AND IMPORTANCE FOR THE STUDY:

Medical plant sector has traditionally occupied an important position in the socio cultural, spiritual and medicinal arena of rural and tribal lives of India. Millions of rural households especially in agricultural families use medicinal plants in a self-help mode. Over one and a half million practitioners of the Indian System of Medicine in the oral and codified streams use medicinal plants in preventive, primitive and curative applications. An estimate of the EXIM Bank puts the global market of remedial plants related trade at US\$60 billion per year growing at the rate of 7% only.

Though India has a rich biodiversity, the growing demand is putting a substantial strain on the prevailing resources. While the demand for remedial plants is growing, some of them are progressively being vulnerable in their usual habitation. For meeting the future needs cultivation of medicinal plant has to be encouraged. The indigenous system, herbal medicine / medicinal herb are getting significance of all over the world. The practice of the rural people regarding this is adequate, but secrecy is maintained within the people. Although it is practiced among the rural people, the information about these herbs is not brought to light as would be useful to others. Hence, this study would reveal the facts about the various herbal medicines that are used in rural areas especially in the present area taken for the study.

Annette Barnabas (2009) study on, The Empowerment of women construction workers as Masons in Tamil Nadu revealed that there was an inherent gender bias against women and also the shared general belief that women construction worker are unfit to be trained informally like men in this sector.

Azadeh Barati, RoohOllah Arab and Seyed Saadat Masoumi (2011) in their study on, Challenges and Problems faced by Women Workers in India revealed that Indian women workers faced many problems viz mental, Sexual harassment, discrimination at workplace, No safety of working women while traveling, lack of family support, Insufficient maternity leaves, job insecurity, workplace adjustment etc.

Khema Sharma (2012) study on, Role of Women in Informal Sector in India revealed that about 94% of total women workers work in the informal sector in India. But they have to face gender perception which is almost inexistent in recognized sector.

Lovely Srivastava, Ambalika Sinha, Ravindra Tripathi and GeetuYadav (2014) conducted their study on, The Status of Women Workers in Unorganized Sector - An Empirical Study, this study indicated that, status of women workers is very poor; their conditions is vulnerable although they are working for long hours as compared to their male counterpart.

Sherly Thomas and Lavanya. V. L. (2015) conducted their study on, Health Condition of Unorganized Women Workers from Slums in Coimbatore - An Empirical Study revealed that 47% of women workers from all groups suffered from diseases/ illness. It may due to unhealthy food and poor environment. The significance of the study that, if women workers are provided with better health facilities and living conditions, it will improve their health.

Santosh Nandal and Parveen Kumar (2016) conducted their study on, Women workers in informal economy: a study of brick kiln in Haryana revealed that about 91% women workers have no agriculture land holding and only 9% women workers have agriculture land holding; 97% of women workers have ration card at kiln and majority of women workers has no insurance policy, they don't have knowledge of labour laws.

The above studies revealed that most of the investigators conducted on women workers in informal sector like construction industries, agriculture etc and also they are faced many problems in this sector. But only few studies conducted on agricultural women's health. It is not enough. Now a day's women's health is very important especially in rural agricultural women's health, because agriculture is the backbone of Indian economy. In this context the present study on 'Herbal medical Usage among Agricultural Women Labours: Health and Economic study' is found to be relevant.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- 1.To study the Herbal Medicine Socio-Economic status of Agricultural women labour of Srirangapatna Taluk.
- 2.To assess the Herbal Awareness of Agricultural women labour and its availability.
- 3.To study the Herbal Medicinal usage and Practice, corresponding to selective diseases.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION:

• **Herbal medicine:** Herbal treatments are the study of botany and use of plants intended for therapeutic purposes or for complementing a diet. Therapeutic Plants have been the basis for medical treatments though much of human civilization. This definition holds the present study.

• **Agricultural Labour:** Agricultural labour means any person employed in agricultural crop production as a wage earner, whether in cash or kind, for his livelihood and includes a person engaged through a contractor or engaged as a self employed person. According to the First Agricultural Labour Enquiry Committee (F.A.L.E.C -1950-55) agricultural labourers are "those people who are engaged in raising crops on payment of wages".

METHODOLOGY:

This study is descriptive baseline in nature involving survey method of research. The data was collected by using unstructured interview schedule constructed by the investigator.

SAMPLE FOR THE STUDY:

This study was conducted on a sample of 30 agricultural women labours, selected using convenience and proportionate random sampling technique from Srirangapatna taluk in Mandya District. Primary data were collected through unstructured interview schedule.

STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES USED TO ANALYSE THE DATA:

Present study falls under descriptive baseline survey, percentage analysis were employed to collect the required and interpretation. The data were analyzed to find out the practice of the respondents on the various aspects of herbal medicines.

Analysis of the data and Interpretation of the results:**1. Herbal Medicine Socio-Economic Status**

The general herbal medicine socio-economic statuses of agricultural women labour are as follows on table no.1

Table 1: Details of the no. and % of Herbal Medicine Socio-Economic Status of Agricultural Women Labours

| Sl. No. | General Information | Response | | | | | |
|---------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|--------|-----|--------|------------|--------|
| | | Yes | | No | | Don't Know | |
| | | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| 1 | Herbal Medicine plays a vital role in Socio-Economic status | 20 | 66.66% | 6 | 20% | 4 | 13.33% |
| 2 | Medical Herbs raise the economy of the country | 19 | 63.33% | 6 | 20% | 5 | 16.66% |
| 3 | People use medicinal herbs on an average | 20 | 66.66% | 6 | 20% | 4 | 13.33% |
| 4 | Medicinal herbs play a role in our, daily diet | 17 | 56.66% | 7 | 23.33% | 6 | 20% |
| 5 | Practice of herbal medicine for your family | 18 | 60% | 6 | 20% | 6 | 20% |
| 6 | Generally use of medicinal herbs is cost effective | 21 | 70% | 5 | 16.66% | 4 | 13.33% |
| 7 | The disease that attack both children and adults can be cured by herbal medicine | 22 | 73.33% | 8 | 26.66% | 0 | - |
| 8 | Medicinal herbs are consumed both as food and medicine by the people | 19 | 63.33% | 6 | 20% | 5 | 16.66% |
| 9 | Without the use of other medicine can be cured by herbal medicine with very loss money | 21 | 70% | 6 | 20% | 3 | 10% |
| 10 | Medicinal herbs found in the surroundings certain diseases can be cured without of expenditure | 21 | 70% | 5 | 16.66% | 4 | 13.33% |

Table 2 revealed that, majority (66.66%) of respondents felt that herbal medicine plays a vital role in socio-economic status, followed by 63.33% of the respondents agreed medicinal herbs raise the economy of the country and medicinal herbs can be consumed both as food and medicine; only 13.33% of the respondents do not possess knowledge about usage of herbs on in average surprisingly, 56.66% them have medicated that medicinal herbs play a role in our daily diet, 60% of respondents practice herbal medicine, and 70% of them have agreed usage of medicinal herbs this cost effective and them have agreed herbal medicine can act as a cost effective medicine in comparison with other medicine practice; 73.33% out of the total number of them have agreed that attack of diseases can be cured both for adult and children by herbal medicine and 70% of them have certain diseases can be cured cost effectively using locally available herbs. Finally it is concluded that, majority of the agricultural women labours suggest the herbal medicine for all kinds of diseases.

2. The Herbal Awareness of Agricultural women labour

The awareness about herbal medicine of agricultural women labours are as follows from table no.2

Table 2: Awareness about Herbal Medicine for different diseases

| Sl.No. | Nature of the Health Care | Name of the Herbal Medicine | Parts used |
|--------|---------------------------|------------------------------|------------|
| 1 | Cold | Holy Basil (Tulasi) | Leaf |
| | | Five leaved chaste tree | Leaf |
| | | Turmeric (Arisina) | Root |
| 2 | Cough | Ginger (Shunti) | Root |
| | | Block Nightshade | Leaf |
| | | Adhatoda Vasica, Nees | Leaf |
| 3 | Fever | Neem Tree (Bevu) | Leaf |
| | | Pepper (Menasu) | Seed |
| | | Phyllanthus | Root |
| 4 | Headache | Betel Vine (Adike) | Leaf |
| | | Eucalyptus (Neelagiri) | Leaf |
| | | Clitoria | Leaf |
| 5 | Stomachache | Drum Stick | Leaf |
| | | Edible Stemmed vine (Khadya) | Leaf, Stem |
| | | Curry Leaf Tree (Karibevu) | Leaf |

From the above table 2 it is observed that, agricultural women labours were identified and classified the nature of health and name of the herbal medicine for common diseases i.e., cold, cough, fever, headache and stomachache and also concluded that, herbal medicine were better than English medicine.

3. The Herbal Medicinal usage and Practice

Agricultural women labours were used and practiced herbal medicine for selected diseases and details are given below in table no.3.

Table 3: Details of no. and % of Herbal Medicinal usage and Practice

| Sl. No. | Nature of Health Care | Usage of Medicinal Herbs | Response | | | | | |
|---------|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|--------|--------------|--------|-------|--------|
| | | | Regularly | | Occasionally | | Never | |
| | | | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| 1 | Cold | Consume raw Tulasi leaves to eradicate common cold | 5 | 16.66% | 18 | 60% | 7 | 23.33% |
| | | Consume the powder of Nochi leaves for common cold | 5 | 16.66% | 17 | 56.66% | 8 | 26.66% |
| | | Consume turmeric to care common cold | 9 | 30% | 18 | 60% | 3 | 10% |
| 2 | Cough | Consume the mixture of Ginger Juice and honey to cure cough | 5 | 16.66% | 18 | 60% | 7 | 23.33% |
| | | Consume the herbal drink at Block height shade leaves to cure cough | 3 | 10% | 19 | 63.33% | 8 | 26.66% |
| | | Consume the herbal drink at Adathoda Vasica leaves to cure cough | 3 | 10% | 20 | 66.66% | 7 | 23.33% |
| 3 | Fever | Neem leaves in hot water and boil it to use it for bathing | 6 | 20% | 22 | 73.33% | 2 | 6.66% |
| | | Pepper juice to care fever | 18 | 60% | 8 | 26.66% | 4 | 13.33% |
| | | Consume whole phylanthus in boiled water | 4 | 13.33% | 18 | 60% | 8 | 26.66% |
| 4 | Headache | Warm betel vine leaved and fix it on your forehead to cure headache | 5 | 16.66% | 19 | 63.33% | 6 | 20% |
| | | Heat water mix using Eucalyptus leaves for curation of headache | 5 | 16.66% | 20 | 66.66% | 5 | 16.66% |
| | | Consume Sanguputpi leaves to cure headache | 3 | 10% | 23 | 76.66% | 4 | 13.33% |
| 5 | Stomachache | Consume the juice of drum stick leaves for curing stomach | 3 | 10% | 24 | 80% | 3 | 10% |
| | | The curd made out of Perandai leaves to cure stomachache | 4 | 13.33% | 25 | 83.33% | 1 | 3.33% |
| | | The juice made out of curry leaves and cured to cure stomachache | 5 | 16.66% | 16 | 53.33% | 9 | 30% |

From the above table 3 it indicates overall response out of respondents for curation of cold through medicinal herbs revealed that occasionally 60 % consume Thulasi leaves, 56.66 % used Nochi leaves powder, and curation of common cold respectively. Out of the total number of respondents it has been responded that occasionally 60 % consume mixture of Ginger juice of honey, 63.33 % consume raw leaves block height shade, and 66.66 % Adothoda vasica, herbal drink for curation of cough respectively and surprisingly 73.33 % of them have used neem leaves in hot water for bathing, 60 % of them have used pepper juice regularly to cure fever, 60 % whole phylanthus in boiled water respectively. Further, 63.33 % of respondents used warm betel vine leaves, 66.66 % of them have used Eucalyptus leave for curation of headache and majority (76.66 %) of the respondents were used sangupatpi leaves for cure headache. Highest (83.33 %) of agricultural women labours were used perandai leaves, 80 % of them have used drum stick leaves and only 53.33 % used curry leaves and cured to cure stomachache occasionally. Finally it is concluded that, all the agricultural women labours selected for the present study were used herbal medicine occasionally for curation of selected diseases.

MAJOR FINDINGS:

The following findings have emerged from the analysis and interpretation of data in the present study, which are highlighted below;

- ✦ About 66.66 % of respondents felt that herbal medicine plays a vital role in socio-economic status.
- ✦ Only 13.33 % of agricultural women labours were unaware of herbal medicine; possess knowledge about usage of herbal medicine.
- ✦ Majority (70 %) of agricultural women labours have agreed usage of medicinal herbs this cost effective and agreed herbal medicine can act as a cost effective medicine in comparison with other medicine practice.
- ✦ 73.33% out of the total number of them have agreed that attack of common diseases i.e., cold, cough, fever, headache and stomachache can be cured both for adult and children by herbal medicine only.
- ✦ Majority of all the agricultural women labour for the present study were aware about herbal medicine and used for selected diseases.

- ✦ Highest (73.33 %) % of agricultural women labour were used neem leaves in hot water for bathing and 60 % of them have used pepper juice regularly to cure fever.
- ✦ Majority (83.33 %) of agricultural women labours were used perandai leaves; 80 % of them have used drum stick leaves and only 53.33 % used curry leaves and cured to cure stomachache occasionally.

CONCLUSION:

Most of the medicinal plants are being extracted for doing and pharmaceutical industries from wild populations. This has adversely affected the very existence of a humbler of plants of high commercial value. Further, with the increasing world demand and renewed global interest in traditional ethno pharmacy coupled with the increasing presentence for natural substances in the healthcare system. The Governmental and Non-Governmental organizations should give high priority to the Siddha and herbal practitioners and encourage herbal medicinal system; the Government should exact law, take precautionary measure to preserve and conserve rare herbs and encourage the women and farmers to cultivate them to protective nation and Health of women is an important factor in determining the overall health of the society. Out traditional medicine (herbal) protective and need of urgency in the current scenario, through training and practice of the agricultural women.

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