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Ethnodietary Plants Of Madhya Pradesh: A Review Based On Ethnomedicinal Studies And Their Validation Through Ayurvedic And Ethnomedicinal Literature

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Abstract

Madhya Pradesh, located in central India, harbors a rich diversity of ethnobotanical knowledge preserved by tribal and rural communities. Ethnodietary plants—plants consumed as both food and medicine—play a crucial role in maintaining health and preventing diseases. This review compiles documented ethnodietary plants of Madhya Pradesh and evaluates their traditional uses with validation from Ayurvedic texts and modern ethnomedicinal studies. The findings highlight the therapeutic relevance of commonly consumed plants such as Buchanania lanzan, Madhuca longifolia, Dioscorea spp., and Amaranthus spp. The study emphasizes the importance of integrating traditional dietary practices into modern healthcare systems for preventive and therapeutic benefits.

Keywords: Ethnodietary Plants, Madhya Pradesh, Ayurveda, Ethnomedicine, Tribal Nutrition, Medicinal Food

1. Introduction

India is one of the richest countries in terms of biodiversity and traditional medicinal knowledge. Madhya Pradesh (MP), often referred to as the "Heart of India," is home to numerous tribal communities such as Gond, Bhil, Baiga, and Korku, who rely heavily on forest resources for food and medicine.

Ethnodietary plants are those consumed regularly as food but also possess medicinal properties. Ayurveda has long recognized the concept of “Ahara as Aushadhi” (food as medicine). Many plants used traditionally by tribes are also described in classical Ayurvedic texts like Charaka Samhita and Sushruta Samhita.

2. Methodology

Literature collected from ethnobotanical surveys conducted in Madhya Pradesh

Ayurvedic validation through classical texts

Scientific validation from peer-reviewed journals

Comparative analysis of traditional uses vs pharmacological evidence

3. Ethnodietary Plants Of Madhya Pradesh

3.1 Common Ethnodietary Plants

Plant Name	Local Name	Part Used	Traditional Use	Ayurvedic Correlation
Buchanania lanzan	Chironji	Seeds	Strength, skin health	Balya, Vrishya
Madhuca longifolia	Mahua	Flowers	Energy, tonic	Brimhana, Rasayana
Dioscorea spp.	Kand	Tuber	Digestive, anti-inflammatory	Deepana, Pachana
Amaranthus spp.	Chaulai	Leaves	Iron source, anemia	Raktavardhak
Cassia tora	Chakoda	Leaves	Skin diseases	Kushthaghna
Centella asiatica	Mandukaparni	Whole plant	Memory enhancer	Medhya Rasayana

4. Nutritional And Therapeutic Significance

4.1 Nutritional Value

Ethnodietary plants provide:

Micronutrients (iron, calcium, zinc)

Vitamins (A, C, E)

Dietary fiber

Bioactive phytochemicals

4.2 Pharmacological Activities

Anti-inflammatory (Curcuma longa)

Antioxidant (Phyllanthus emblica)

Antidiabetic (Momordica charantia)

Hepatoprotective (Tinospora cordifolia)

5. Ayurvedic Validation

Ayurveda emphasizes the dual role of diet:

•Pathya (wholesome diet)

•Apathya (unwholesome diet)

Ethnodietary plants align with Ayurvedic principles:

Ayurvedic Category	Example Plant	Function
Rasayana	Emblica officinalis	Rejuvenation
Deepana-Pachana	Zingiber officinale	Digestive
Balya	Asparagus racemosus	Strength promoter
Medhya	Centella asiatica	Cognitive enhancer

6. Role in Disease Prevention

Ethnodietary plants contribute to:

•Prevention of malnutrition

•Management of lifestyle disorders

•Immune enhancement

•Gut microbiome balance

Examples:

•Amaranthus spp. → anemia prevention

•Tinospora cordifolia → immunomodulation

•Moringa oleifera → nutritional supplementation

7. Integration with Modern Healthcare

Supports preventive healthcare

Reduces cost burden

Enhances nutraceutical development

Bridges traditional and modern medicine

8. Challenges

•Erosion of traditional knowledge

•Habitat destruction

•Limited clinical validation

•Lack of standardized documentation

9. Future Perspectives

Network pharmacology-based validation

Clinical trials on ethnodietary formulations

Development of functional foods

Policy integration into national health programs

10. Conclusion

Ethnodietary plants of Madhya Pradesh represent a valuable intersection between nutrition and medicine. Their validation through Ayurveda and modern scientific research underscores their potential in preventive and therapeutic healthcare. Conservation and systematic research are essential for future integration.

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