

ETHNOMEDICINAL USAGES OF *STREBLUS ASPER* LOUR. BY THE TRIBALS OF  
BARGARH DISTRICT IN ODISHA

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## ABSTRACT

The present paper highlights on an important ethnomedicinal plant, *Streblus asper* Lour. of family Moraceae. It is a well-known medicinal plant extensively used in Ayurveda and other traditional medicinal systems without any side effects. During routine field survey to different localities in the district this plant along with several plant species along with this plant have been collected, identified and preserved. The species is very useful in curing diseases and ailments like menorrhoea, wound, loose motion, dysentery, fever, gum pain, mouth ulcer, dental problems, piles, eczema, stomach disorders, constipation, scabies, ringworm and itch mouth ulcer, and strengthening tooth,

**KEYWORDS:** Ethnomedicine, *Streblus asper*, Tribals, Bargarh district.

## INTRODUCTION

*Streblus asper* Lour. (family Moraceae) is an important medicinal plant with multifarious curative properties. It has several vernacular names in different languages. It is known as 'Akshadhara' in Sanskrit, 'Sahora' and 'Daheya' in Hindi, and 'Sand Paper tree' and 'Toothbrush tree' in English. Locally it is called as 'Sahada' in Odia.

This plant is recognised as 'Shalavriksha' or 'temple tree' (sacred plant) in Tamil Nadu <sup>[1]</sup> and many other parts of the country. It is a traditionally used as medicinal plant distributed in several countries such as India, Sri Lanka, Thailand, China, Malaysia, Philippines and Vietnam.<sup>[2,3]</sup> In India the plant is found in Assam, Andaman Islands, Maharashtra, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh.<sup>[4]</sup>

## Taxonomical Classification

Kingdom: Plantae

Subkingdom: Tracheophyta

Super division: Spermatophyta

Division: Magnoliophyta

Class: Magnoliopsida

Family: Moraceae

Genus: *Streblus*Species: *asper*

## Brief description of the plant

A rigid evergreen shrub or small tree, plant parts with milky juice. Bark soft, light grey, irregularly ribbed.

Leaves simple, alternate, rigid, elliptic or obovate, irregularly toothed, rough on both sides. Flowers axillary, minute, dioecious. Male flowers globose, minute, perianth campanulate, yellowish green. Stamens 4, long, inflexed in bud. Female flowers are very small, solitary or 2-4 flowers together. Styles 2, filiform, connate at base. Fruit a yellow 1-seeded berry, sub-globose. Flowering January to March. Fruiting April to May.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

Bargarh district is inhabited by many rural and tribals such as *Kondh*, *Gond*, *Binjhal*, *Sahanra (Soara)*, *Munda*, *Kisan*, *Kharia*, *Bhuiyan*, *Oran*, *Mirdha*, *Binjhia*, *Dal*, *Savar*, *Lodha*, *Bhotoda* and *Parja*. An ethnobotanical survey was conducted in different forest localities of Bargarh district during 2017-2019. During this survey some local herbal practitioners and experienced and knowledgeable local people were involved to collect information about the ethnomedicinal uses of collected plant species. A good number of plant species were collected from region of forests, where 'Sahada' is one among other plant species. The medicinal uses of collected plant species have been cross-checked with the people of different villages to confirm the information. Besides, it has also been cross-checked with some scientific literatures.<sup>[4-17]</sup> The taxonomic identification of the collected plant specimens was made with the help of flora books.<sup>[18-20]</sup> The voucher specimens have been deposited in the Department of Botany, Panchayat College, Bargarh (Odisha) for future reference.

### Ethnomedicinal observations

Several remarkable medicinal utilities of this plant have been reported earlier. The bark extract has been used in fever, diarrhoea, relief toothache and antigingivitis.<sup>[21]</sup> Besides, stem bark is useful in filarial.<sup>[22,23]</sup> The shoot of this plant has been used as toothbrush for strengthening teeth and gums.<sup>[24]</sup> The root is used to cure ulcers, sinuses and used as an antidote to snake bite, the milky juice has been used as an antiseptic and astringent.<sup>[25]</sup>

### Present Observation on ethnomedicinal value of 'Sahada'

**Root:** Root paste or powder with curd is taken twice to cure menorrhoea in females.

**Bark:** Bark is crushed with fermented rice water to cure wound. The paste is also used in acne. Bark decoction (2 – 3 teaspoon) is taken twice daily to cure loose motion and dysentery. The decoction (one teaspoon) is taken twice daily to cure fever. Warm decoction is also used to get relief from gum pain, mouth ulcer and dental problems.

**Leaf:** Leaf powder (5g) is taken with honey twice daily in empty stomach to cure piles. Leaf ash mixed with a little fresh/ dry goat faeces is applied to cure eczema. Leaf extract with whole plant powder and cow ghee is taken twice daily to cure stomach disorders.

**Stem:** Stem is used as tooth brush; besides it is used to cure constipation, mouth ulcer, and to strengthen tooth.

**Seed:** Seed powder (3-5 g) is taken in empty stomach once or twice daily with honey to get relief from itching, scabies and ringworm.

**Fruit:** Young fruit is chewed to cure tooth bleeding and strengthen the teeth.

### CONCLUSION

A number of plants have been used in traditional medicine since ancient period. The medicinal herbs are safe to use and they are almost free from side effects or less side effects. The tribals including other rural people have great faith in traditional system of medicines and still depend upon these natural products for the cure of various diseases and ailments. The tribals of the study area have sound knowledge on the use of different medicinal plant species for their healthcare. They have acquired this knowledge from their long-term experiences and practices as well as from their ancestors.

The present study deals with *Streblus asper* which is treated not only a sacred plant but also a medicinal plant with multifarious uses. Mostly people of remote area of the district use its different parts for the treatment of various diseases like menorrhoea, loose motion, dysentery, piles, mouth ulcers, constipation, itching, scabies, ringworm, eczema and various dental problems like gum pain, teeth bleeding and strengthening the teeth. That is why it is necessary to protect and conserve the species to promote this plant for safe use by the future generation.

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