COMMON RICE WEEDS USED FOR FIRST AID BY CHHATTISGARH FARMERS

P. Oudhia
Department of Agronomy,
Indira Gandhi Agricultural University, Raipur-492 001, India

ABSTRACT
A detailed ethnobotanical survey was conducted in Chhattisgarh region to identify the common rice weeds used for first aid by Chhattisgarh farmers. The help of specially prepared questionnaire was taken. The survey revealed that farmers use 13 common weeds for first aid. The survey suggested that the documentation of the ethnobotanical knowledge and scientific recognition of the medicinal properties of these common weeds are essential.

Chhattisgarh (India) is rich in bio-diversity. Many valuable medicinal plants grow in the region as weeds (Qudia and Tripathi, 1999a). Chhattisgarh is known as “Rice Bowl of Eastern India”. Many medicinal weeds infest the rice fields of Chhattisgarh (Oudhia, 1999). Majority of native people still have faith in traditional systems of medicines and they treat their health problems with plants available in their surroundings, specially during field work where they invest their major time period, far from medical facilities (Oudhia et al., 1999). During field works, farmers use common weeds as first aid measures. Due to non-availability of any systematic information as survey was conducted by Department of Agronomy, IGU, Raipur to list out the common rice weeds used for first aid by Chhattisgarh farmers.

A detailed ethnobotanical survey was conducted in whole Chhatisgarh region including Raipur Bastar, Sarguja, Rajnandgaon, Durg districts. The survey was done during 1997-1999. The help of specially prepared questionnaire was taken. Total 150 respondents were selected randomly from different districts for the survey. In survey seven ailments were identified as major ailments which requires first aid and also which are most common to farmers. These ailments are minor injuries, scorpion bite, snake bite, sunstroke, headache, toothache and indigestion.

The survey revealed that farmers use 13 common weeds for first aid. These weeds are Tridax procumbens, Cynodon dactylon, Caesulia axillaris, Blumea lacera, Eclipta alba, Sida acuta, Achyrhanthes aspera, Leucas aspera, Spillanthus acmella, Ocimum basilicum, Xanthium strumarium and Scoparia dulcis. These are common wees of rice fields and bunds (Oudhia and Tripathi 1999b) (Table 1). In case of injury, cuts, wounds etc. farmers apply fresh juice of crushed leaves in injured part. In majority of cases, the bleeding stops and fast healing of wound occur. For bleeding fresh juice of whole plant of Caesulia is useful. It is general belief in Chhattisgarh, that keeping the Achyrhanthes root in foot wears, repels the scorpion in case of scorpion bite, as first and measure farmers apply fresh juice of crushed plant in affected part. Leucas aspera, locally known as Gumma, is one of the popular pothers. It is general belief that person taking Leucas leaves as pothber for long period develops specific smell in his body which repells snakes away. In case of snake bite farmers apply the fresh juice of crushed leaves in affected part. For severe toothache, during field work, farmers chew Spillanthus fruits. The bitter taste of this fruit juice mixed with saliva relieves toothache immediately. For acute headache farmers apply paste of Ocimum leaves in affected part. In Northern-hilly part of Chhattisgarh, farmers wear the Xanthium fruits as earring to cure headache. In hot summers,
sun-stroke is a common ailment. To prevent and also to cure sunstroke farmers use the decoction of Scoparia. During field work, while working under open sky, farmers chew Scoparia leaves to prevent Sunstroke. Mature fruits of Cucumis trigonus, locally known as Kothi Kekdi, is a popular on field breakfast for farmers. This fruits cure indigestion and help farmers to work for long times.

The survey suggested that the documentation of this ethnobotanical knowledge and scientific recognition of these medicinal properties are essential. This documentation will provide a base to researcher for developing new drugs from these problematic weeds.

### REFERENCES


