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## NEUTRACEUTICAL HERB *ABRUS PRECATORIUS* USED BY MUSHDHAR TRIBE IN GORAKHPUR REGION

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### ABSTRACT

The present study aimed to investigate nutraceutical herb *Abrus precatorius* (Fabaceae) used by Mushdhar tribe in Gorakhpur region. Questionnaire method was adopted for documentation of folk indigenous knowledge of collected herb during survey. The interviews were carried out in local community especially Mushdhar tribe and knowledgeable persons who were the main user of medicinal plants. The nutraceutical potential uses have been recorded in this paper.

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KEY WORDS : *Abrus precatorius*, Mushdhar Tribe, Nutraceutical

### Introduction

*Abrus precatorius* is a severely invasive plant in warm temperate to tropical regions, so much so that it has become effectively pantropical in distribution. District Gorakhpur of U.P. has good number of tribal population i.e. "Mushdhar" especially in villages viz. Chauri, Khorabar, Bansatti, Gaighat, Sariha, Puthawahia, Tarkulhawa, Nai Bazar of Gorakhpur region. The tribe Mushdhar use many plants species for health care practices and knowledge of nutraceutical herbs. Gorakhpur district lies between latitude 26° 46' N and longitude 83° 22' E. The district covers an area of 7,483.8 square kilometres. It is bounded by Maharajganj district to the north, Kushinagar and Deoria districts in the east, Ambedkar Nagar, Azamgarh, and Mau districts to the south, and Sant Kabir Nagar district to the west. The Mushdhar tribals are the real informers of ethnomedicinal use of herbs which

has descended from one generation to another as a domestic practice<sup>1,4,5</sup>.

### Methodology

A study in the tribal villages of Gorakhpur district was carried out, during the year 2012- 2013. During the survey, plants occurring in different regions were collected, photographed and identified and also the general remarks like nature of growth, habit, habitat, month of collection, medicinal property were noted through interviews and discussions among the local people in and around the study area. Data were also collected through questionnaires in their local language. The identification was made with the help of expert (expert from Department of Botany, DDU Gorakhpur University, Gorakhpur), standard floras and literature. The collected plant specimens were preserved by herbarium technique<sup>2,3</sup>.

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### Result and Discussion

The collected herb is commonly called as *Abrus precatorius* (Gumcchi). Taxonomical position



Fig. 1 : *Abrus precatorius*

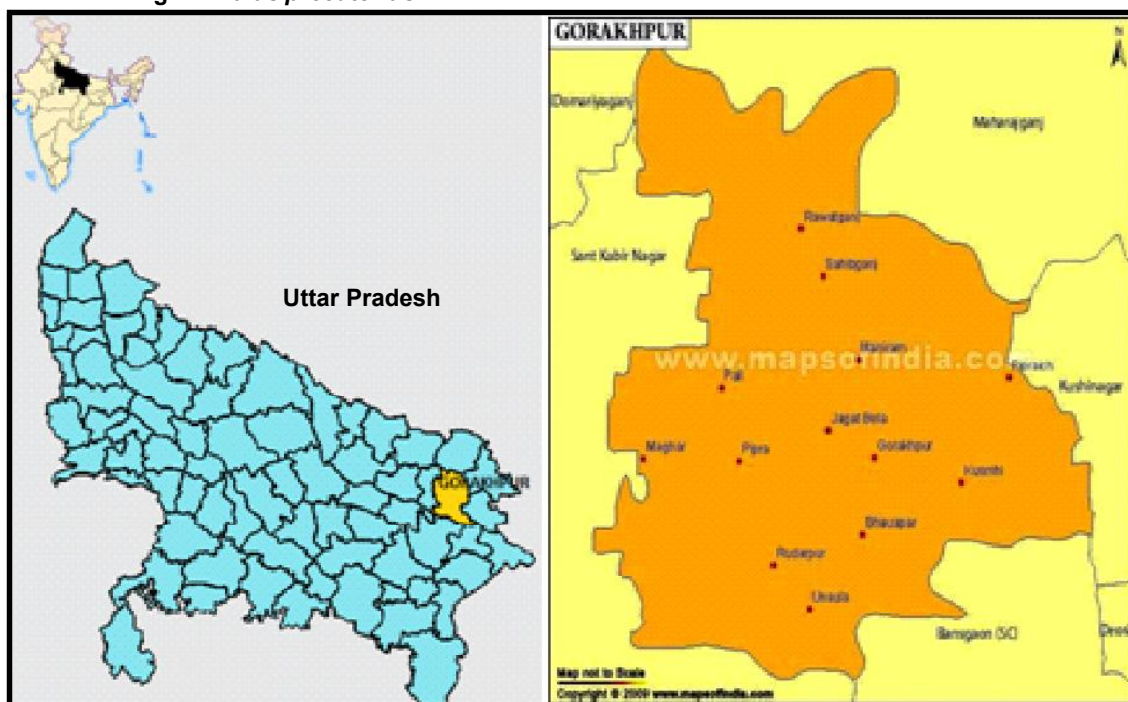
is a slender twiner with alternately placed compound leaves. Each leaf has about 20 pairs of narrow, oblong leaflets, looking like a delicate feather. The rose to purple flowers are crowded at the end of a stalk. Fruits are short, inflated pods, splitting open when mature to reveal the round, hard and shiny seeds which are scarlet but black at the base.

**For Wound:** Grind the roots of *Abrus precatorius* with fresh rhizome of *Curcumalonga*. Apply the paste on the wound until it cures.

**For Worm infection:** Grind the dry seeds of *Abrus precatorius* to make powder. Take one teaspoonful of this powder once a day for two days.

**For Greying of hair:** Grind the leaves and seeds of *Abrus precatorius*. Extract juice from the paste. Apply the juice on hair as oil once a day one hour before taking bath. Apply for 3-4 days.

**For Cough:** Grind the roots of *Abrus precatorius*. Take 5 g of this paste with pure *ghee* (made from cow's milk) thrice a day for four days. Precaution: Don't take any non-vegetarian food during the course of this treatment.



Figs. 2 & 3 : Study Area of Gorakhpur

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**For Leucoderma:** Grind the dry seeds of *Abrus precatorius* to make powder and it mixed with water is applied on affected area.

**For Evil spirit:** Grind the root of *Abrus precatorius* with 3 to 5 number of black pepper and 5 g of dried ginger to make a paste. Take this paste orally to get rid of evil spirits or black magic. Also, tie a piece of root on the arm to get immediate result.

**For Harpes:** Grind the roots of *Abrus precatorius* with water and paste applied on affected area.

**For Abortion:** Collect the root of *Abrus precatorius* on any Saturday and grind it with water to a fine paste. Take 5 ml to 10 ml of this paste orally as a single dose once only.

**For Abdominal discomfort:** Grind the root of *Abrus precatorius* to make a paste of it. Administer 5 g of

the paste as a single dose. A single dose cures abdominal tumour also.

**For Ringworm:** Root juice mixed with half amount of *Allium sativum* L. and applied on Ringworm spots twice a day.

**For Dandruff:** Fresh leaves paste rubbed on the skin of head or affected area upto cure.

Collected neutraceutical herb is used to cure of 11 different ailments viz. Dandruff, Ring worm, Abdominal discomfort, Abortion, Harpes, Evil spirit, Leucoderma, Cough, Greying of hair, Worm infection, Wound, used by Mushdhar Tribe in Gorakhpur region. Further studies are needed to isolate active component to develop new neutraceutical value for different human ailments. Thus in future the plant extract could be exploited to control various bacterial diseases.

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