

Covid pandemic has put a question mark over our understanding about nature. Though, mankind is better equipped to understand the etiology of the disease with array of sophisticated instruments for observation, we are still not able to find out a cure against Covid infection. Three vaccines have entered third phase of clinical trial and likely to take few more months before the same is available in the market. In the meantime, alternative knowledge tradition continues to spring surprises with handy treatment. On 17th March, Wu Dong, Professor at the Peking Union Medical College Hospital along with China's top three Doctors addressed media in Beijing and claimed efficacy of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM). In Wuhan, among 87% of patients with mild disease of Corona infection, TCM worked quite well and also in those who have recovered from their critical illness.

The herbs used in China are root of *Radix astragali* (Huang qi黄耆), roots of *Radix glycyrrhizae* (Gan cao 甘草), roots of *Radix saposhnikoviae* (Fang feng 防风), *Rhizoma atractylodis Macrocephalae* (Bai 白朮), flower of *Lonicerae japonicae flos* (Jin yin hua 金银花), and fruit of *Fructus forsythia* (Lian qiao 连).

Buoyed by the efficacy of traditional medicine, Ministry of AYUSH in India came up with right combination of traditional medicine as preventive measure and immunity booster for mass usage. The AYUSH Ministry has also proposed to Indian Council of Medical research(ICMR) for conducting trial of some Ayurvedic medicine on COVID-19 patients. In the meantime, AYUSH Ministry has advised drinking of herbal tea / decoction (*Kadha*) made from Tulsi (Basil, Botanical name: *Ocimum basilicum*), Dalchini (Cinnamon, Botanical name: *Cinnamomum verum*), Kalimirch (Black pepper, Botanical name: *Piper nigrum*), Shunthi (Dry Ginger, Botanical name: *Zingiber officinale*) and Munakka (Raisin), once or twice a day. Jaggery (natural sugar) and / or fresh lemon juice may be added as per taste.

Trikatu-Black pepper (*Piper nigrum*), Long pepper (*Piper longum*), Ginger (*Zingiber officinale*) itself has been a popular combination in Traditional Indian Medicine (TIM). It is used even now in clearing excess mucous from throat and lungs. Lemon gives vitamin C. Its combination is always helpful for clearing mucous from lung, which causes respiratory problem and ultimately choking of lungs in extreme cases. This is the major cause of mortality in Covid cases.

Kuth (*Saussurea costus*) is a native herbal plant found in Kashmir valley, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand. It is also known as the snow lotus or costus root, and has been used in traditional medicine for long. Its roots have been traded for fragrance and efficacy for millennia. Kuth is used for various respiratory problems. In case of nasal infection one can take Kuth powder, Bael giri powder (*Aegle marmelos*), Pippali (*Piper longum*), Saunth (Dry Ginger), Munakka (grapes) and Til oil (Sesame oil). After processing it and filtration, it can be taken as nasal drops in common cold.

Kuth is also taken in asthma and bronchitis by mixing its powder with kulthi, kateri, saunth and certain aromatic grasses.

Then, we have Karkoti (*Momordica dioica*) which has anti-inflammatory, and hepato-protective property. Devadaali (*Luffa echinata*) is helpful in bronchitis, and jaundice. It is anti-inflammatory, analgesic and anti-oxidant. The bark of Kadamba (*Neolamarckia cadamba*) possess quinovic acid which has been found to have anti-viral property. Bark also has anti-inflammatory property which is a plus point in the COVID treatment to reduce inflammation. The leaves of the plant has anti-pyretic property and then also anti-diarrhea as well as anti-malarial property. In a way, it has several properties which are antidote to the various symptoms caused by the COVID-19.

We know how quinine was derived from cinchona tree found in Amazon forests. This has dramatically reduced global mortality by helping to eradicate malaria. Several other native Amazonian medicines of plant origin, particularly in Peru, are known to have anti-microbial and anti-inflammatory activity, anti-viral and immune-modulating effects. Some of the studied plants are : Sangre de Grado (drago) (*Croton lechleri*) in the Euphorbiaceae family and Una de Gato (*Uncaria tomentosa*) in the Rubiaceae family.

*Uncaria tomentosa* (Cat's claw) too has quinovic acid just like in the bark of the Kadamba tree. Quinovic acid induces immuno-stimulant activity and the plant is being harnessed for dengue virus treatment. Quinovic acid from *Uncaria tomentosa* has been found effective against two different RNA-virus, Vesicular Stomatitis virus, and Rhinovirus 1B, *in vitro*.

Since, COVID-19 too has been a RNA-Virus, which does respond to the Chloroquine *in vitro*, derived from bark of another Amazon plant, Cinchona (from same Andean region and Rubiaceae family to which Cat's claw belongs); an urgent trial of *in vitro* effect of Quinovic acid obtained from bark of Kadamba or plant of Una de Gato against COVID-19 can be taken and if this shows positive result, a clinical trial can be undertaken for developing efficacious and cheaper drug against the to-be recurrent COVID-19 viral storm.

When the crisis is of global proportion, all modes of knowledge have to be applied to find a solution. Traditional Indian Medicine (TIM) too needs to come out of closet and work on new formulations to tackle the ever erupting new diseases. Any knowledge tradition, once fossilized, loses the relevance during unseen crisis. Silos of superiority must be broken down to adopt and synthesize wisdom from different culture and civilization.

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