



## Plants used by tribes of Rewa (Madhya Pradesh) in the treatment of liver disorders

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### Article info

Received: 15/09/2025

Revised: 21/10/2025

Accepted: 30/10/2025

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### Abstract

Ethnomedicinal knowledge held by tribal communities in Rewa district (Vindhya region), Madhya Pradesh, includes a variety of plant remedies for liver-related ailments such as jaundice, hepatitis-like symptoms, abdominal pain associated with hepatic dysfunction, and other “liver troubles.” This review synthesizes published ethnobotanical surveys from Rewa and adjacent tribal areas to summarize commonly used species, modes of preparation, plant parts used, and the evidence base supporting their traditional hepatoprotective use. The review highlights 10 frequently cited taxa (including *Ocimum canum*, *Phyllanthus* spp., *Boerhavia diffusa* and others), summarizes preparation methods (decoctions, pastes, seeds/seed extracts), discusses methodological strengths and limitations of the primary surveys, and identifies priorities for pharmacological validation and conservation. Documentation and scientific validation of tribal remedies from Rewa may inform future hepatoprotective drug discovery and local healthcare support.

**Keywords:** ethnomedicine; Rewa; liver disorders; jaundice; hepatoprotective; tribal medicinal plants

### Introduction

The tribal populations inhabiting the Vindhya region around Rewa (including Gond, Kol, Baiga, Panika and other groups) retain extensive traditional knowledge of local flora for healthcare. Several regional ethnobotanical surveys report widespread reliance on plant remedies for diverse ailments, including a category of conditions described locally as “liver troubles,” jaundice or prolonged yellowing and abdominal complaints consistent with hepatic disease (Shukla, Srivastava, & Rawat, 2010; Bharti et al., 2013). Documenting species used for liver complaints is important both for cultural conservation and as a starting point for pharmacological investigation into hepatoprotective agents.

This review collates and interprets published documentation of plants used by tribes of Rewa and nearby tribal areas specifically for liver-related uses, and presents a concise dataset (plant

name, botanical name, family, part used, mode of preparation).

### Methodology

This review draws on published ethnobotanical surveys and regional studies documenting traditional medicinal plant use in Rewa district and neighbouring tribal regions of Madhya Pradesh. Primary sources were identified through targeted searches of ethnobotany and regional journals and institutional repositories; key works used here include Shukla, Srivastava, and Rawat (2010) — a detailed survey of Rewa district flora and folk uses — and an ethno-medicinal survey of the Vindhya region (Bharti et al., 2013).

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**Observations (Ethnobotanical evidence)**

**Summary of surveys**

**Shukla et al. (2010)** provide a comprehensive inventory of 166 medicinal taxa used across Rewa district, noting indications including fever, dysentery, skin disease and **jaundice/liver complaints** and listing plant parts and preparations.

**Bharti et al. (2013)** specifically surveyed the Vindhya region of Rewa and Sidhi and documented 26 taxa used by Kol and Gond tribes; the study recorded local preparations and indications and explicitly mentions use of plant remedies for **jaundice and liver-related complaints**.

Additional regional surveys and compilations (2021–2022) report species such as *Ocimum canum* (seeds) and other taxa used for “liver troubles/jaundice” in the Rewa area (Agronomy/Taxonomic compilations; regional ethnobotanical reports) (Agronomy Journal compilation, 2021; local biodiversity surveys, 2022).

**Representative plants for liver disorders in Rewa and nearby tribal reports**

Below is a tabular compilation of plant species repeatedly documented in Rewa or closely related Madhya Pradesh tribal surveys as being used for liver-related ailments. Each row cites the source(s) reporting the use.

**Table 1: Ethnomedicinal plants reported from Rewa (and nearby tribal surveys) for liver disorders**

No.	Local/common name	Botanical name	Family	Part used	Mode of preparation (traditional)	Source (selected)
1	Bantulsi / wild basil	<i>Ocimum canum</i> Sims	Lamiaceae	Seeds (and leaves)	Seeds/seeds-extract or decoction used for “liver troubles / jaundice”; leaves used as adjuncts.	Agronomy/AllResearch regional compilation (2022); Shukla et al. (2010)
2	Amla (Indian gooseberry)	<i>Phyllanthus emblica</i> L. (syn. <i>Emblica officinalis</i> )	Phyllanthaceae / Euphorbiaceae (trad.)	Fruit, leaves	Decoction or fruit eaten; used as liver tonic/ to improve digestion.	Bharti et al. (2013); Shukla et al. (2010)
3	Punarnava / spreading hogweed	<i>Boerhavia diffusa</i> L.	Nyctaginaceae	Root, whole plant	Decoction or juice of root/whole plant given as hepatoprotective / to treat jaundice symptoms.	Regional ethnobotanical reviews from MP; ethnobotany compilations (Pandey et al., regional sources)
4	Arjuna	<i>Terminalia arjuna</i> (Roxb.) Wight & Arn.	Combretaceae	Bark	Bark decoction used traditionally for liver/general “heat” ailments and blood purification.	Bharti et al. (2013); Shukla et al. (2010)
5	Bahera	<i>Terminalia bellirica</i> (Gaertn.) Roxb.	Combretaceae	Fruit, leaves	Powder/decoction used for digestive and hepatic complaints in folk formulations.	Shukla et al. (2010)
6	Haritaki / related Phyllanthus	<i>Phyllanthus niruri</i> /spp.	Phyllanthaceae	Whole plant / aerial parts	Decoction used in management of jaundice / hepatitis-like conditions (traditional).	Regional reports & Shukla et al. (2010)
7	Kalmegh / king	<i>Andrographis</i>	Acanthaceae	Whole	Decoction / infusion	Ethnobotanical surveys

	of bitters	<i>paniculata</i> (Burm. f.) Nees		plant / aerial parts	used in cases of “fever with liver involvement” or to relieve jaundice symptoms (reported regionally).	of MP/nearby tribal districts (compilations)
8	Flacourtia (local wild plum)	<i>Flacourtia indica</i> (Burm. f.)	Salicaceae / Flacourtiaceae	Fruit	Fruit used by some tribal communities in MP to treat liver disorders (documented in neighbouring MP tribal studies).	Tiwari (Mandla district study) cited for MP tribal use (2017)
9	Hygrophila / Talmakhana	<i>Hygrophila spinosa</i> T. Anderson	Acanthaceae	Leaves, root	Leaf paste or decoction employed for stomachic and related ailments; sometimes reported in hepatic symptom contexts in local reports.	Bharti et al. (2013); regional surveys
10	Ocimum sanctum / other basils	<i>Ocimum sanctum</i> L.	Lamiaceae	Leaves / seeds	Decoction or leaf preparations used widely in MP folk medicine; some local informants report use for liver discomfort/ jaundice.	Shukla et al. (2010); Bharti et al. (2013)

### Discussion

The Rewa district surveys (Shukla et al., 2010; Bharti et al., 2013) document a **broad folk pharmacopeia** — multiple taxa are used for digestive, febrile and hepatic complaints; however, the primary indication labels (e.g., “jaundice” or “liver trouble”) are frequently descriptive and not backed by clinical diagnoses in the surveys. This is common in ethnobotanical work but should be considered in interpretation (Shukla et al., 2010).

Several taxa listed above (e.g., *Phyllanthus* spp., *Boerhavia diffusa*, *Andrographis paniculata*, *Terminalia* spp.) have independent pharmacological literature indicating hepatoprotective, antioxidant or anti-viral properties — supporting the plausibility of the traditional indications (regional reviews; experimental pharmacology literature cited in reviews). Where Rewa-survey evidence is lacking for a particular species, neighbouring tribal district studies were used to corroborate

traditional hepatic uses (Tiwari, 2017; regional compilations, 2022).

Modes of preparation recorded in Rewa are typically **decoctions, seed extracts, pastes or oral consumption of fresh juices**, consistent with oral administration aimed at systemic effects. Many reports emphasize use of **fresh plant parts** and single-plant preparations rather than complex polyherbal recipes (Bharti et al., 2013; Shukla et al., 2010).

### Methodological limitations noted in the primary literature

Survey studies vary in sample size of informants and the degree of clinical specificity (often “jaundice” is self-reported or interpreted by informant, not medically confirmed). This limits direct clinical interpretation. (Shukla et al., 2010; Bharti et al., 2013). Taxonomic identifications are generally provided, but voucher specimens and deposition details vary between studies. Cross-verification with herbarium specimens is therefore

recommended before biochemical/pharmacological follow-up.

There is limited published pharmacological validation specifically tied to Rewa-collected specimens; many claims are supported only by traditional reports or by pharmacology studies on the same species from other regions

### Conclusion

Tribal communities of Rewa district use a diverse set of locally available plants to manage liver-related complaints, with preparation methods dominated by decoctions, seed extracts and fresh juices. Several traditionally used taxa (e.g., *Phyllanthus* spp., *Boerhavia diffusa*, *Andrographis paniculata*, *Terminalia* spp., *Ocimum* spp.) merit prioritized pharmacological evaluation using Rewa-collected specimens. Future work should (1) document clinical descriptions alongside ethnomedicinal reports, (2) deposit voucher specimens in regional herbaria, (3) apply phytochemical and hepatoprotective bioassays in vitro and in vivo, and (4) develop conservation and sustainable-use plans for frequently harvested taxa. Collaborative research with tribal healers will preserve valuable traditional knowledge while ensuring benefit sharing and ethical research practices.

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#### Cite this article as:

Dwivedi S. (2025). Plants used by tribes of Rewa (Madhya Pradesh) in the treatment of liver disorders. *Int. J. of Pharm. & Life Sci.*, 16(11):21-25.

Source of Support: Nil

Conflict of Interest: Not declared

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