

## **ETHNOMEDICINAL PLANTS USED BY THE MALAYALI TRIBALS IN PACHAMALAI HILLS OF TAMIL NADU INDIA**

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Article Received on  
02 Nov 2014,

Revised on 27 Nov 2014,  
Accepted on 22 Dec 2014

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### **ABSTRACT**

An ethnobotanical survey was carried out among the Malayali tribal groups in Pachamalai hills of Tamil Nadu, India. The ethnomedicinal information was collected with a questionnaire among the Malayali traditional healers who have rich knowledge in medicinal plant. During the survey there are about 33 species of ethnomedicinal plants were collected. The plants described in the present investigation were mostly used for 19 types of diseases such as skin diseases, diabetes, fever, cough, allergy and nervous disorders.

**KEYWORDS:** Asthma; Cold; Diabetes; Diarrhoea; Fever and Headach

### **INTRODUCTION**

Ethnobotanical survey has immense importance with medical science.

Now it is a well established branch of science with much attention. Globally, about 85% of the traditional medicines used for primary health care are derived from plants. Traditional medicine and ethnobotanical information play an important role in scientific research, particularly when the literature and field work data have been properly evaluated. Earlier studies showed that nearly one third of about 18000 higher plants species are used by 427 tribal communities. Recently various ethnobotanical studies have been reported to expose the knowledge from the various tribals of Tamil Nadu.

Each and every tribal uses certain plants as medicine. Documenting the indigenous knowledge through ethnobotanical observations are important for the conservation of biological resources as well as their sustainable utilization. It is also necessary to collect the

information about the knowledge of traditional medicines, preserved in tribal and rural communities of various parts of India and also Tamil Nadu before it is permanently lost. The herbal medicine is used worldwide from the time immemorial, the medicine was safe and no side effect and 80% of population depended upon the traditional knowledge of medicine where it has been transmitted orally for the centuries is fast disappearing from the face of the earth. Due to the modern technology to use the bio-chemical reaction and using different part of the plant (Ganesan et al., 2004 and Kamla Raj., 2009)

But still few decades years to grow the using and study of medicinal plant and the whole world to using the traditional knowledge, it become responsibility of the scientific community to unravel the information and document it for availability. Hence the present study has been undertaken to document the ethnomedicinal knowledge of Malayali tribal people in Pachamalai hills of Tamil Nadu.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The Pachamalai hills spread over two districts namely Salem and Tiruchirappalli in Tamil Nadu about 75 km away from the Trichy city. The hills are situated in the range of 400-1200 m above the sea level. More than 300 villages are present in the Pachamalai hills which are inhabited by the Malayali tribals. The present study was undertaken in the villages such as Puranadu, Sengatupatti and Thuriyur blocks in Pachamalai hills, located in Tiruchirappalli district of Tamil Nadu, South India. Relevant information on ethnomedicine of the area has been collected from the elderly persons of the tribal community who are rich in ethnomedicinal knowledge.

## RESULT

In the present investigation, there are 33 species of ethnomedicinal plants were collected from the Malayali tribals area of Pachamalai. A brief account of collected ethnomedicinal plants, botanical names, local name, families, and ethnomedicinal uses are arranged disease wise here under

### Enumeration of Ethnomedicinal Plants

#### 1 Asthma

*Solanum trilobatum* L. Thoodhuvalai, Solanaceae. Juice of leaves is taken orally for seven days.

*Adhatoda zeylanica* Medicus. Adathodai, Acanthaceae. Leaf paste is taken orally.

## 2 Cold

*Adhatoda zeylanica* Medicus. Adathodai, Acanthaceae. Leaf powder is mixed with water and taken orally in the morning.

*Boswellia serrata* Roxb. Ex Colebr. Kungiliyam, Burseraceae. Powdered resin is sprayed on burning charcoal and the smoke is inhaled.

*Plectranthus coleoides* Benth. Omavalli chedi, Lamiaceae. Juice of leaves is taken orally.

*Solanum trilobatum* L. Thoodhuvalai, Solanaceae. Juice of leaves is taken orally for seven days early in the morning until cure.

*Terminalia chebula* Retz. Kadukkai maram, Combretaceae. Powdered fruit is mixed with water or cow's or goat's milk and taken internally.

*Vitex negundo* L. Notchi, Verbenaceae. Fresh leaves are boiled with water and the vapour is inhaled twice a day.

## 3 Cough

*Adhatoda zeylanica* Medicus. Adathodai, Acanthaceae. Leaf powder is mixed with water and taken orally in the morning.

*Terminalia chebula* Retz. Kadukkai maram, Combretaceae. Powdered fruit is mixed with water or cow's or goat's milk and taken internally.

*Vitex negundo* L. Notchi, Verbenaceae. Fresh leaves are boiled with water and the vapour is inhaled twice a day.

## 4 Diabetes

*Andrographis lineata* Wallich ex Nees. Siriyanangai, Acanthaceae. Leaf powder is mixed with cow's or goat's milk and taken orally.

*Costus speciosus* (J. Koen.) Smith. Koshtam, Zingiberaceae. Powdered leaves are taken internally with cow's milk.

*Gymnema sylvestre* (Retz.) R. Br. Ex Roem. and Schult. Sirukurinjan, Asclepiadaceae. Powdered leaves are mixed with cow's milk and boiled rice, kept overnight and taken internally twice a day.

## 5 Diarrhoea

*Cipadessa baccifera* (Roth.) Miq. Pulippan chedi, Meliaceae. Paste of leaves is mixed with cup of water or milk and taken orally.

## 6 Dysentery

*Acalypha fruticosa* Forsskal. Chinni chedi, Euphorbiaceae. Decoction of leaves is taken orally.

## 7 Eye infections

*Alangium salvifolium* (L.f.) Wangerin. Alinji, Alangiaceae. One or two drops of fruit juice are poured into eyes.

## 8 Fever

*Adhatoda zeylanica* Medicus. Adathodai, Acanthaceae. Leaf decoction is taken internally twice a day until cure.

*Hemidesmus indicus* H.f. Nannari, Asclepiadaceae. Decoction of whole plant is taken internally.

*Terminalia chebula* Retz. Kadukkai maram, Combretaceae. Powdered fruit is mixed with water or cow's or goat's milk and taken internally.

*Vitex negundo* L. Notchi, Verbenaceae. Fresh leaves are boiled with water and the vapour is inhaled twice a day.

## 9 Headache

*Ceropegia candelabrum* L. Perun kodi, Asclepiadaceae. Paste of leaves is applied on forehead.

*Pergularia daemia* (Fors.) Chiov. Veli parutthi, Asclepiadaceae. Fresh leaves are boiled with water and the vapour is inhaled.

*Vitex negundo* L. Notchi, Verbenaceae. Fresh leaves are boiled with water and the vapour is inhaled twice a day.

## 10 Heel cracks

*Asparagus racemosus* Willd. Thanneer vittankilangu, Liliaceae. Paste of tender and mature leaves is applied topically on the heels before going to bed.

*Drymaria cordata* (L.) Roem. & Schult. Kodicharai, Caryophyllaceae. Paste of leaves is applied over the heels before going to bed until cure.

*Rubia cordifolia* L. Kalutharupan chedi, Rubiaceae. Root paste is applied topically on heel before going to bed.

## 11 Jaundice

*Centella asiatica* (L.) Urban. Vallarai, Apiaceae. Juice of leaf is mixed with equal amount of goat's milk and taken orally for seven days.

## 12 Menorrhagia

*Hemidesmus indicus* H.f. Nannari, Asclepiadaceae. Paste of root is mixed with water or cow's milk and taken internally twice a day.

## 13 Nervous disorders

*Bischofia javanica* Blume. Romaviruksha pattai Bischofiaceae Paste of stem bark is applied externally on the affected places.

## 14 Stomach

*Spermacoce hispida* Nathaichuri, Rubiaceae. Seeds are crushed into paste and taken orally to get relief from stomach-ache.

## 15 Snakes bites

*Abrus precatorius*, Kundumani, Fabaceae. Root Powder is taken orally along with cow's milk to treat scorpion sting and snakes bite.

## 16 Skin disease

*Sphaeranthus indicus* Kottai, Asteraceae. Leaf, flower and seeds ground into paste and applied topically to treat skin diseases.

## 17. Urinary

*Tribulus terrestris* Nerunchimul, Zygophyllaceae. Fruit and root are mixed with water and boiled and taken orally to prevent white discharge in women and to treat urinary troubles.

## 18. Vomiting

*Murraya koenigii* Karuveppilai, Rutaceae. Leaf juice is taken orally to arrest vomiting.

## CONCLUSION

The present investigation found that the present healers are the final generation of traditional healers of the Pachamalli hills. The Tribals populations are having high knowledge in medicinal plants and their usage for appropriate methods. The Traditional healers are experienced in diagnostics method through natural way like physical appearance, excretory substances like urine, sweat and faeces then head ache etc. because they don't have high equipments in their sub rural areas..It is necessary to document the medicinal plants available in the forests with the help of traditional healers before the healers' knowledge is to be extinct.. The traditional medicine was optional to form the basic pharmaceutical drug to treat the diseases (Santhya et al. 2006). The hill Patchamallai have plenty of medicinal plants however we are not fully aware of them. The present findings identified 33 medicinal plants and their medicinal value.

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