

**ETHNO MEDICINAL PLANTS OF SALEM DISTRICT, TAMILNADU,  
INDIA – A REVIEW****Devaki R.<sup>1\*</sup> and Santhosh Kumar R.<sup>2</sup>**

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**ABSTRACT**

Ethno botanical studies have great significance in intensifying our comprehension of medicinal plants used by tribal communities, the rich diversity got together by them for their nourishment, and the alternate way taken by them for conserving it. The data of medicinal plants have been collected over several centuries based on various systems of medicine such as the Siddha system and other Traditional Indian systems, Amchi, Modern. In India, it is declared that traditional physicians use 2500 plant species and 100 species of herbs assist as natural principles of medicine. Kanjamalai, the temple of Lord Siddheswara Swamy is located in the North-Western foothill, 16 kilometers far from the city of Salem, and is nearer to Salem Steel Plant. It derives its name from Kanju (gold) that rests on its streams,

Ponni Aru and Kandha Nadhi. India constitutes a rich population of Pteridophytic plants, the bulk of it grows richly in moist tropical and temperate forests. The Kolli hills rest between 11°30'00'' N latitude and 78°15'00''E longitude. It is located in the Namakkal District of Tamil Nadu above the river Cauvery, covering an area of about 503 km. Palamalai hill is situated in the North-West of Salem District, Tamilnadu which is densely covered by a reserved forest. Herbs that are frequently employed in the preparation of medicine formulations are mostly found in those regions that support various ailments of human beings and animals.

**KEYWORDS:** Ethno medicinal plants, Salem, Kanjamalai hills, Kolli hills, Palamalai hills.

## INTRODUCTION

Ethno botanical studies have great significance in intensifying our comprehension of medicinal plants used by tribal communities, the rich diversity got together by them for their nourishment, and the alternate way taken on by them for conserving it.<sup>[1]</sup> Medicinal plants have been an essential part of life in various geographical circles for food and drug. India has over 3,000 years of therapeutic inheritance based on medicinal plants.<sup>[2]</sup> The data of medicinal plants have been collected over several centuries based on various systems of medicine such as the Siddha system and other Traditional Indian systems, Amchi, Modern. In India, it is declared that traditional physicians use 2500 plant species and 100 species of herbs assist as natural principles of medicine.<sup>[3]</sup> Kanjamalai, the temple of Lord Siddheswara Swamy is located in the North-Western foothill, 16 kilometers far from the city of Salem and it is nearer to the Salem Steel Plant. It derives its name from Kanju (gold) that rests on its streams, Ponni Aru and Kandha Nadhi. In the past it was tree-covered, the mountain was seen for other kinds of gold-alchemical and medicinal plants of various kinds.<sup>[4]</sup> India constitutes a rich population of Pteridophytic plants, the bulk of it grow richly in moist tropical and temperate forest and they exist in various eco-geographically endangered regions from sea level to the giant mountain are of great interest.<sup>[5]</sup> The Kolli hills rest between 11°30'00" N latitude and 78°15'00" E longitude. It is located in the Namakkal District of Tamil Nadu above the river Cauvery, covering an area of about 503 km<sup>2</sup>.<sup>[6]</sup> The Shevaroy is the foremost hill range at the Southern end of the Eastern Ghats, Tamilnadu, India, between 11°45' and 11°55' N and 78°10' and 78°20' E and envelopes an area of 470 km<sup>2</sup> and its altitude stretch from 400 to 1600 m.<sup>[7]</sup> Palamalai hill is situated in the North-West of Salem District, Tamilnadu which is densely covered by reserved forest. It comes under Southern monsoon forests a dense Scrub. The Palamalai hills can be entered through Mettur Taluk, Salem District. Palamalai lies between 11°45' latitude and 77°44' longitude E with an altitude of 1050-1100 M above MSL.<sup>[8]</sup> India has a hugely rich tradition of herbal or folk medicine utilized to cure various frightful diseases, and there is easily accessible documentation on traditional healing applications followed in India by tribal people (Subhose *et al.*, 2005; Shankar *et al.*, 2012). In this work, an observation on folk medicinal plants was conducted in hardly some places in the Salem district of Tamil Nadu where certain cultural groups have been living since the ancient period, especially the 'Malayali Tribes'. Such tribal groups have been living close to unfolded environments and the Cauvery River, and have been constantly exposed to many diseases, thus they have constructed the

traditional healing practices to protect themselves. Folk medicine differs from standard medicine by the use of entire plants, by merging a few to more plants together, and by the method of diagnosis (Vickers *et al.*, 1999).<sup>[9]</sup>

### Plants in kanjamalai hills

#### Acanthaceae

1. *Andrographis echoides* (Gopuramthangi), *Andrographis paniculata*(peryanangai) Plant-fever, wounds, and cuts. Leaves are indicated for snake bites, constipation, skin infections, snake repellent, anti-inflammtory, and antipyretic.
2. *Rhinacanthus naustus* (nagamalli)- Leaves are used for wounds and cuts, skin diseases

#### Aristolochiaceae

3. *Aristolochia indica* (Ichuramuli)- Root particularly for leprosy, skin diseases, and snake bites.

#### Malavaceae

4. *Abutilon indicum* (thuthi) - The root is specified for leprosy and cough. Leaves are used in the treatment of bronchitis, gonorrhea, rheumatism, ulcer, and diarrhea.

#### Solanaceae

5. *Solanum surattense* (Kandankathari) - The fruit of this plant is specified for paralysis, tuberculosis, and breathing troubles.
6. *Datura metel* (ummathi) - Leaves are mentioned for treating cough, asthma, and mumps.

#### Erythroxylaceae

7. *Erythroxylum monogynum* (sempulichan) - Wood and bark gave for fever, dyspepsia

#### Ceasalpinaceae

8. *Cassia auriculata* (Aavarai) - The root is specified for skin diseases, leaf-anthelmintic, and seeds to treat ophthalmia.
9. *Cassia occidentalis* (Thagarai) - The root is stated for ringworm and saliva secretion.
10. *Tamarindus indica* (Puli) - Fruits are in particularly treated for sore throat, ulcers, wounds, and dysentery.<sup>[10]</sup>

**Pteridophytes in kanjamalai hills****Pteridaceae**

11. *Adiantum capillus- veneris* (Roaddu keerai) - The paste of the leaf is used to treat cuts and wounds.
12. *Adiantum caudatum* (Trailing maiden Hair) - Decoction of the leaves specified for fever and cough. Paste of leaf is applied for itches and skin diseases.
13. *Adiantum lunulatum* Burm.f. (Pachai keerai) - Fresh leaf juice is given as a diuretic for one week, twice a day. Ground fresh leaves with coconut oil treated externally for skin diseases.
14. *Pteris biauritia* L. (Nandukuddhi) - Rhizome paste is used in the application for relieving pain.
15. *Pteris cretica*. L. (Nandukuddhi) - Leaf paste is applied for healing wounds.

**Marsileaceae**

16. *Marsilea minuta* L. (Water clover) - Fresh leaf juice is indicated for cough and bronchitis. A paste made from a fresh leaf is used to treat skin diseases.
17. *Marsilea quadrifolia* L. (Aarakeerai) - The paste of leaf with turmeric is for the external application of skin diseases.

**Polypodiaceae**

18. *Drynaria quercifolia* (L) (Aattukal kizhangu) - Rhizome paste is given for cough and dyspepsia. It is astringent and used to treat swellings of the body pain, arthritis pain, and joint pain.

**Actinopteridaceae**

19. *Actinopttris radiata* (Sw) (Korai panai) - The juice of stem along with salt and pepper is given for fever for up to two days, thrice a day.

**Selaginellaceae**

20. *Selaginella cillaris* Spring (Chhotisanjeevan) - The whole plant is made into paste added with coconut oil and used for skin diseases and headaches.<sup>[5]</sup>

**Plants in kolli hills****Fabaceae**

21. *Abrus precatorius* L. (*Kundumani*) - The root bark of the plant is ground with water and boiled given for jaundice.

**Mimosaceae**

22. *Acacia leucophloea* (*Vellavelam*) - The bark is made as paste and applied externally for wound and skin infections.

**Amaranthaceae**

23. *Achyranthes aspera* (*Nayuruvi*) - The paste of leaf and stem is applied for cuts and wounds.

**Poaceae**

24. *Bambusa arundinaceae* (*Moongil*) - The extract made from the leaf is given orally to make the body cool.

**Asteraceae**

25. *Calendula officinalis* (*Marikollundhu*) - The dried powder of flower half teaspoon with fruit juice makes the body cool, induces appetite, and is given for stomach pain.<sup>[11]</sup>

**Plants in palamalai hills****Liliaceae**

26. *Aloe vera* (L) (*Katralai*) - The gel when given orally reduced the body heat and has antibiotic action.

**Lamiaceae**

27. *Anisochilus carnosus* Wall (*Karpuravlli*) - The fresh leaf juice is taken orally for allergic problems.
28. *Anisomeles indica* (*Peimiratti*) - This plant possesses an aromatic smell, astringent, carminative, and has tonic actions. It is specified for gastric irritation and for intermittent fevers.
29. *Anisomeles malabarica* (*Peyimeratti*) - The decoction prepared from the whole plant is administered for fever due to teething in children, swellings, and epilepsy.

**Annonaceae**

30. *Annona squamosa* (Seetha) - The decoction made from the root is administered for depression, spinal cord diseases, bronchitis, and fever.<sup>[8]</sup>

**CONCLUSION**

The ethno botanical herbs of Salem found in hills of Kanajamalai, Kolli hills, Palamalai hills, and Shevory hills together are described with the treatment methods followed by the tribal communities and used in the Traditional System of Medicines such as Siddha and other Indian systems of Medicine are explained in this review. Herbs that are frequently employed in the preparation of medicine formulations are mostly found in those regions that support various ailments of human beings and animals.

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