

ETHNOMEDICINAL PLANTS USED IN TOUCH THERAPY AT ADILABAD DISTRICT OF TELANGANA STATE

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ABSTRACT

Plants used by tribals in touch therapy have been enumerated. Touch therapy is an old practice among the tribals and other rural people in district of Telangana state. In this therapy locally available plant species are used for the prevention of the diseases. Adilabad is known for its significant forests and Adivasi forest dwellers which include various tribal communities existing since centuries and has a strong social, historical and cultural back ground. The tribal community of Adilabad district includes primarily Kolams, Naikpods, Pardhans, Gonds, Thotis, Chenchus and Mathuras were contacted and the information on 40 species belonging to 30 families from different pockets was documented. This knowledge has not been recorded earlier from the reported site.

Keywords: *Ethnomedicine, Touch therapy, Tribals, Adilabad*

INTRODUCTION

Touch therapy is an interesting method of treatment of ailments practiced by, among others, the Kolams, Naikpods, Pardhans, Gonds, Thotis, Chenchus and Mathuras tribals of Adilabad. The tribals believe that when a plant or plant part is made to touch the body or placed near the sufferer, it cures the disease. The method of treatment is suggested as more a magic than treatment and is called as magical cure of diseases (Jain 1963). They have a very good knowledge about the plant wealth. Documentation of traditional knowledge through ethnobotanical studies is very important for conservation and utilization of indigenous people's knowledge. Initial studies in the last 50 years have been primarily devoted to the preparation of inventories of plants of a certain region or specific ethnic groups. Many scientists, naturalists and thinkers from outside the community of ethnobotanists, started emphasizing the importance of ethnobotanical inquires and explorations.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The authors conducted extensive field survey in different remote areas. Intensive field work was undertaken by the author for a period of five years from January 2007 to December 2011. Ethnomedicinal information was gathered from herbal medicine practitioners, 'guniyans', experienced old men and women of different tribal communities. The information recorded from one area has been cross checked and confirmed from that obtained from another area. The species were identified with the help of floras. The present study is aimed at the preparation of an inventory of plants and their medicinal uses practiced by tribals in Adilabad district, related to the traditional medicinal practices of local tribal communities such as Kolams, Naikpods,

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Pardhans, Gonds, Thotis, Chenchus and Mathuras to achieve the following objectives viz., 1) To record the traditional medicinal practices of the Tribal communities of Adilabad district. 2) Botanical identification and herbarium preparation of the plants used by them. 3) To record the methodology followed by them in diagnosis during administration and curing of the diseases. 4) To document the scientific data for future reference/studies. 5) To study the other non-medicinal uses of the plants such as food, fodder and other uses.

Ravishankar (1990) On “Ethnobotanical studies in Adilabad and Karimnagar districts of Andhra Pradesh, India, Madhu (2010) submitted his thesis on ““Ethnobotanical studies in Adilabad forest area medicinal plants and community”. Later on Ravi Shanker and Henry (1992) were published a note on the medicinal plant wealth of Adilabad district. Previous authors had done some exploratory studies on ethnobotany of the district; Dr. Koppula Hemadri (1994) published Shastravettalanu Akarshistunna girijana vaidyam. In the above studies inventories of medicinal plants used for human ailments were documented from few localities. Vedavathy, S; Mrudula, V & Sudhakar, A: Tribal Medicine of Chittoor District, Andhra Pradesh (India), Herbal Folk Research Centre, Tirupati, 1997. Pullaiah *et al* (1998) reported Ethnomedicinal plants of the district and they provided scientific and vernacular names for each species. “While Mubeen *et al.* (2004-2005) prepared an inventory of important medicinal plants of Adilabad district of Andhra Pradesh. Swamy and NSNS (2008) reported some ethnomedicinal plants used by tribes in the Nirmal forest division Adilabad District of Andhra Pradesh. The study aimed to record some interesting ethnomedicinal plants available and which are practiced by surrounding local adivasis of Nirmal forest division for their health care.

Enumeration

The species, arranged alphabetically by their botanical names, are enumerated in Table-1. Family, local name, Parts used and uses of plant parts in contact therapy as reported by local inhabitants are included

Table 1: List of Ethnomedicinal Plants Used in Touch Therapy

S. No	Botanical name	family	local name	Uses
1.	<i>Abrus precatorius</i> L.	Fabaceae	Guruvinda	A piece of root is tied around the ear opposite the affected part of the ear to cure dental carries
2.	<i>Abutilon Indicum</i> (L.) Sweet	Malvaceae	Tuturubenda	Root is collected on a Saturday in early morning and is tied to the waist of the pregnant woman to prevent miscarriage. It is also used to prevent bad dreams
3.	<i>Achyranthes aspera</i> L	Amaranthaceae	Uttarani	Root is collected at the time of solar eclipse; ad is tried to the arm or hung around the neck to relieve all types of fever.
4.	<i>Aegle marmelos</i> (L.)	Rutaceae	Maradu	Root is collected on <i>Sankranti</i> in early mornig. It is tried to the arm to prevent cholera.
5.	<i>Allium cepa</i> L.	Liliaceae	Vallulli	Children suffering from nasal bleeding are asked to inhale the smell of the bulb of the plant.
6.	<i>Argyreta nervosa</i> (Burm. f.) Boj,	Convolvulaceae		The upper surface of the leaf is bandaged over the boil to get suppuration
7.	<i>Asparagus racemosus</i> Willd.	Liliaceae	Shatavari	A small piece of root is tied around the ears to relieve vertigo due to excessive heat.
8.	<i>Barleria prionitis</i> L	Acanthaceae		Root is hung at the door of cowshed to protect cows from contagious diseases

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9.	<i>Butea monosperma</i> (Lam.)	Fabaceae	Modugu	Root is collected on a Saturday and it is tied to the arm of woman to get rid of barrenness
10.	<i>Calotropis procera</i> (Ait.) R.Br.	Fabaceae	Gilledu	Root is collected on a Saturday and it is tied to the arm of woman to get rid of barrenness
11.	<i>Careya arborea</i> Roxb.	Barringtoniaceae	budaburija	Fruit is believed to be a snake repellent. Stem fibre is tied to the waist to cure 'Dhuda' (a form of diarrhea) in case of infants.
12.	<i>Cissampelas pareira</i> L.	Menispermaceae	adavibankath eega	After applying mustard oil on the leaf, it is shown to the fire and then fomented over boils to get suppuration.
13.	<i>Clitoria ternatea</i> L.	Fabaceae	Shanku pushpi	A small piece of root (white variety) is tied to the right ear of the patient to cure headache
14.	<i>Corchorus capsularis</i> L.	Tiliaceae	parantalikura	Root is collected on a Sunday in early morning. It is tied to the waist of the baby to stop baby from crying.
15.	<i>Crateva Magna</i> (Lour.) DC	Capparaceae	Ulmiri chettu	A leaf is kept on the ear of the mother to expel out the retained placenta.
16.	<i>Dendrophthoe falcate</i> (L.f.)	Loranthaceae	Badanika	Plant growing on a Neem tree (<i>Azadirachta indica</i>) is collected during lunar or solar eclipse. It is tied to the arm to prevent bad dreams. Again, when this plant is growing on a Bel tree (<i>Aegle marmelos</i>). It is collected during solar eclipse and tied to the waist of the patient to relieve hysteria
17.	<i>Diplocyclos palmatus</i> (L.) Jeffrey	Loranthaceae	Lingadonda	Plant growing on a Neem tree (<i>Azadirachta indica</i>) is collected during lunar or solar eclipse. It is tied to the arm to prevent bad dreams. Again, when this plant is growing on a Bel tree (<i>Aegle marmelos</i>). It is collected during solar eclipse and tied to the waist of the patient to relieve hysteria
18.	<i>Elephantopus scaber</i> L.	Asteraceae	Enugutamara	A small piece of root is tied to the arm to prevent bad dreams. The root is collected on a Sunday early morning.
19.	<i>Euphorbialigularia</i> Roxb.	Euphorbiaceae	Akujamudu	A small piece of root is inserted into the vagina of a pregnant woman to induce abortion
20.	<i>Evolvulus nummularius</i> (L.)	Convolvulaceae	Chitti elukachevi-aku	Whole plant is tied around the head to get sound sleep
21.	<i>Ficus racemosa</i> L.	Moraceae	Ravi	Root is collected on a Saturday in the early morning from the east of the plant. It is tied on the ear with a thread opposite to the affected part to relieve dental carries
22.	<i>Helicteres isora</i> L.	Malvaceae	adavichamant hi	A Fruit is hung around the neck of the patient to relieve post delivery pain
23.	<i>Hemidesmus indicus</i> (L.)	Sterculiaceae	sugandhipala	A small piece of root is hung around the neck to cure fever
24.	<i>Lehocarpus frutescens</i> (L.) R.Br	Apocynaceae		A necklace of stem pieces is worn to cure rheumatism.
25.	<i>Jasmiun arboresces</i> Roxb	Oleaceae	Adavi malli	Flowers are collected in the early morning. The smell of the flower is inhaled seven times to cure headache.
26.	<i>Leucas aspera</i> (Willd.) Link	Lamiaceae	Thummi	Root is collected on a Saturday or Sunday in the early morning, which is worn on the neck to cure cough, It also cures asthma and stomach disorder

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27.	<i>Mimosa pudica</i> L.	Mimosaceae	Athipathi	Root is collected on a Saturday or Sunday in the early morning. It is tied around the neck of children to cure cough and also used to ward off the snakes.
28.	<i>Mucuna pruriens</i> (L.) DC	Fabaceae	Atti patti	Root is collected on a Saturday or Sunday in the early morning. It is tied to the arm of male partner for prolonged sexual intercourse.
29.	<i>Oroxylum indicum</i> (L.)	Fabaceae	Dhundillum	A fruit is hung at the main door of house or a necklace of seeds is tied around neck to prevent contagious disease from affecting children
30.	<i>Phoenix sylvestris</i> Roxb.	Arecaceae	Ita	7 leaflets together are made to touch the whole body to relieve pain due to black bee sting, bee sting and wasp sting.
31.	<i>Plumbago zeylanica</i> L.	Plumbaginaceae	Chitramula	Mustard oil is applied on the leaf and warmed. It is applied on the leaf and warmed. It is fomented on boils to get suppuration.
32.	<i>Pongamia pinnata</i> (L.)	Fabaceae	kanugu	Root is collected on a Saturday. It is tied to the waist or children to cure syphilis.
33.	<i>Premna serratifolia</i> L.	Verbenaceae	Thakkadu	Root is collected on a Saturday or Sunday in the early morning from the east of the plant. It is tied to the waist to cure rheumatism
34.	<i>Saraca asoca</i> (Roxb.)	Verbenaceae	Asoka	Root is collected on a Saturday or Sunday in the early morning from the east of the plant. It is tied to the waist to cure rheumatism.
35.	<i>Semecarpus anacardium</i> L.f.	Anacardiaceae	Adavimaidi	After making a hole in the fruit. It is tied to the affected part with a cow's hair to cure filarial. A necklace of fruits is hung around the neck of a mother cow for more lactation.
36.	<i>Spondias pinnata</i> (L.f.) Kurz	Anacardiaceae	Adavimamam idi	A fruit is hung around the neck of children to cure mouth ulcer
37.	<i>Stereospermum chelonoides</i> (L.f.) DC	Bigoiaceae	Pisul	A necklace of seeds is worn to cure headache.
38.	<i>Tamarindus indica</i> L.	Caesalpiniaceae	Chinta	Seed is made to touch the affected part to relieve pain due to scorpion sting
39.	<i>Terminalia arjuna</i> (Roxb. Ex Dc.) Wt. & Arn.	Combretaceae	Thella maddi	Root is collected on Saturday or Sunday in the early morning. It is tied to the waist to cure intermittent fever.
40.	<i>Terminalia chebula</i> Retz.	Combretaceae	Karakkai	A seed is tied to the arm or a necklace of seeds is worn to prevent small pox.

Conclusion

This paper reports forty-seven (47) ethnomedicinal uses of forty (40) plant species (belong to thirty (30) families) found in Adilaba district. Tribals believe these plants to have supernatural powers and collect them on specific days like: Saturday, Sunday, solar eclipse, lunar eclipse and *Sankranti*, and other tribal festival etc. The plants are worshipped by the collectors (who could be the traditional healer or the medicine man or at times the sufferer as well). During the collection of the plant parts the collector has to kneel down before the plant and pray to the jungle goddess to allow him to collect plant parts for medicinal use. The plant parts are also worshipped.

Before their use in touch therapy, or during the process of touch therapy, either the medicine man or the sufferer is to kneel down before his deity many such deities worshipped in some places in

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the form of icon, but mostly symbolized through stone or a shape of wood and light Dhup. Then the plant part is tied to the arm or the waist or the affected part with a thread. This magico-religious belief attracts people both from the rural and urban areas. It is strongly believed by the people that the administration of the medicine in this method ensures its maximum effectiveness.

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