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Medicinal plants used against gynaecological disorders by the tribal people of Nallamalais Andhra Pradesh

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Abstract

The study has been carried out in Nallamalais of Andhra Pradesh reveal the use of some medicinal plants for gynaecological disorders (Emmenagogue, Leucorrhoea, and Menorrhagia). The tribals of the Nallamalais have tremendous, traditional ethno-botanical knowledge.

Keywords: Nallamalais, gynaecological, ethno-botanical

Introduction

The relationship between man and plants is an age-old phenomenon. Man has been using plants for various purposes from pre-historic times. According to Marini and Bettolo (1980) traditional medicine provides health services to about 70-80% of total world population. But in recent years due to large scale urbanization and cutting down of forests the very existence of the treasure of indigenous medicine and its related knowledge is threatened. If it is not exploited will vanish soon. This can be achieved and preserved by immediate approach and interaction by a dedicated team of workers/NGO's or by entrepreneurs interested in the field.

The modern world has turned its eyes towards age-old wisdom of the tribes, their life style and their knowledge about the utility of diverse plants and their miraculous cure as medicine. At present people are vexed with the allopathic treatment and its side effects, the modern society believes in the use of plants and their products as a source of natural medicine in sharp contrast to the synthetic medicine. Gynaecological disorders are very common among the women. Modern medicine gives temporary relief but traditional medicine is panacea for the gynaecological disorders.

Nallamalais are one of the Centres of Plant Diversity (CPD) (WWF & IUCN, 1995), represent a group of moderately steep hills located in the Central Eastern Ghats between latitudes 15°20' - 16 - 30' N and longitudes 78°30' - 80°10' E in Andhra Pradesh State. They are extended to an area of 7640 sq. Km covering Kurnool, Mahaboobnagar and Prakasam Districts. Nallamalais is currently, known to harbour plenty of medicinal plants and land of most primitive tribes 'Chenchus' 'Yanadis' and 'Sugalis'. The forest rich area is inhabited chiefly by the tribals. The tribals have their unique forest dependent life style and traditional concepts on diseases and medicines. The tribals, in general are endogamous groups sharing common language and culture. They are living under varying geo-ecological setting of hills and forest areas and far away from modern life. All the tribes of Nallamalais directly or indirectly depend on forest products for their daily needs like food, fodder, shelter and medicine. A number of plants are being used by the tribal people for the treatment of various ailments on the basis of their rich traditional knowledge about the plant species found in the forests. The present paper discusses the plants used for gynaecological disorders in Nallamalais.

Emmenagogue: Are herbs which stimulate blood flow in the pelvic area and uterus some stimulate menstruation woman use Emmenagogue to stimulate menstrual flow when menstruation is absent for reasons other than pregnancy such as hormonal disorders or conditions like oligomenorrhea.

Leucorrhoea: Is a sticky, whitish or yellowish vaginal discharge with a foul smell, which causes some sort of stigma. There are many causes of leucorrhoea the usual one being estrogens in balance. The amount of discharge may increase due to vaginal infection or STDs.

Menorrhagia: Menstrual periods with abnormally heavy or prolonged bleeding or is a menstrual period with excessing heavy flow under the larger category of Abnormal Uterine Bleeding (AUB)

Methodology

Survey was conducted with the primary objective of interacting with tribal people regarding the use of medicinal plants against gynaecological disorders. Based on the information given by tribals, voucher specimens were collected from the study site. The collected specimen were made into herbarium following Santapau (1955) and Jain and Rao (1977). Each specimen is identified with the help of

various floras (Gamble, Andhra Pradesh Flora, Ellis, Kurnool Flora) and specimens housed in Department of Botany, Osmania College (Autonomous) Kurnool.

Results & Discussion

The following enumeration of plants investigated are arranged as per botanical name, followed by the family, local names and plant parts used.

Table 1: Plants used for Emmenagogue

S. No	Name of the plant species	Family	Local name	Used Parts
1.	<i>Abrus precatorius</i> . L.	Fabaceae	Gurivinda/licorice	Seeds
2.	<i>Aloea vera</i> (L.)Burm.f.	Liliaceae	Kalabanda/gheekawar	Leaves
3.	<i>Aristolochia indica</i> L.	Aristolochiaceae	Eswari	Root
4.	<i>Boswellia serrata</i> Roxb	Burseraceae	Andugu/shellaki	Gum
5.	<i>Butea monosperma</i> (Lam.)Taub.	Fabaceae	Moduga/Parrot tree	Flowers
6.	<i>Cardiospermum halicacabum</i> L.	Sapindaceae	Budda teega	Root
7.	<i>Cissus quadrangularis</i> L.	Vitaceae	Nalleru/wildgrape	Stem
8.	<i>Elytaria acaulis</i> (L.f.) Lindau	Acanthaceae	Chepputtattaku	Leaves
9.	<i>Hemidesmus indicus</i> (L.)R.Br.	Asclepiadaceae	Sugandipala/Ushba	Root
10.	<i>Holarrhena pubescens</i> Wall.	Apocynaceae	Aakupala/Coralswirl	Seeds
11.	<i>Leucas aspera</i> (Willd.) Link.	Lamiaceae	Tummi/Dronapushpi	Leaves
12.	<i>Mucuna pruriens</i> (L)DC.	Fabaceae	Dulagondi/Velvetbean	Root
13.	<i>Oxalis corniculata</i> L.	Oxalidaceae	Pulichintaaku	Whole plant
14.	<i>Pedaliium murex</i> L.	Pedaliaceae	Pedda palleru	Whole plant
15.	<i>Phyllanthus maderaspatensis</i> L.	Euphorbiaceae	Nalla usirika	Whole plant
16.	<i>Tribulus terrestris</i> L.	Zygophyllaceae	Palleru	Whole plant
17.	<i>Wrightia arborea</i> R.Br.	Apocynaceae	Tellapala	Root bark

Table 2: Plants used for Leucorrhoea

S. No	Name of the plant species	Family	Local name	Useful parts
1.	<i>Amaranthus spinosus</i> L.	Amaranthaceae	Thotakura	Root
2.	<i>Andrographis paniculata</i> (Burm.f.)	Acanthaceae	Nelavemu	Root
3.	<i>Asparagus recemosus</i> Willd.	Liliaceae	Sathavari	Root
4.	<i>Canthium parviflorum</i> Lam.	Rubiaceae	Balusu	Leaves
5.	<i>Cassia montana</i> (Roth.)Singh.	Caesalpinaceae	Kondatangedu	Leaves
6.	<i>Curculigo orchoides</i> Gaertn.	Hypoxidaceae	Nelatatygadda	Tubers
7.	<i>Memecylon umbellatum</i> Brum.f.	Melastomataceae	Allichettu	Root bark
8.	<i>Sida cordifolia</i> L.	Malvaceae	Chirubenda	Whole plant
9.	<i>Sterculia villosa</i> Roxb.	Sterculiaceae	Yerrapoliki	Stem bark
10.	<i>Strychnos potatorum</i> L.f.	Loganiaceae	Chilla	Seeds
11.	<i>Syzygium cumini</i> (L.)Skeels	Myrtaceae	Neredu	Stem bark
12.	<i>Terminalia arjuna</i> Wight&Arn.	Combretaceae	Tella maddi	Stem bark
13.	<i>Terminalia bellirica</i> Roxb.	Combretaceae	Tani	Gum
14.	<i>Xanthium strumarium</i> L.	Asteraceae	Marulamangani	Leaves

Table 3: Plants used for Menorrhagia

1.	<i>Bauhinia variegata</i> L.	Caesalpinaceae	Devakanchnam	Flower buds
2.	<i>Caesalpinia bonduc</i> (L)Roxb.	Caesalpinaceae	Gachhakaya	Root bark
3.	<i>Erythrina variegata</i> L.	Fabaceae	Badisa	Leaves
4.	<i>Pergularia daemia</i> (Forssk.)Chiov	Asclepiadaceae	Dushtaputeega	Seeds
5.	<i>Ventilago denticulata</i> Willd.	Rhamnaceae	Yerrateega	Stem bark

Thus, this study of medicinal plants, could help to identify new or lesser known medicinal species and by interacting with tribals providing a clue for systematic pharmacognosy, therapeutic and clinical research. The tribals depend on the plants around them which made them acquire knowledge of medicinal properties of many plants by trial and error. Consequently they became the storehouse of knowledge of many useful as well as harmful plants accumulated and enriched through generations and passed on to one another without any written documents. It must be properly documented and preserved urgently because most of the tribals are being assimilated into modern societies and the treasure of knowledge of uses of plant resources is fast

disappearing. It is not only essential to conserve such a wealth of information found among the tribals but also to enumerate and record such details and diverse information, which constitute a modern biomedical system to meet the ever increasing requirement of mankind. The increased demand for these forest products lead to over exploitation, causing depletion of precious plant species. Though the forest dwellers are by and large conservation oriented, the middlemen and traders are making them to resort to unsustainable and destructive harvesting. The ethno-medicinal plants, particularly threatened ones, should be cultivated in herbal gardens, agroforestry systems and home gardens to encourage their sustainable utilization and hence

conservation. Tribals should be shown alternate methods of livelihood and they should be encouraged to cultivate the important medicinal plants. Efforts should also made by researchers and scientists to conserve and propagate.

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