

ETHNOBOTANICAL INFORMATION ON MEDICINAL PLANTS FOR TREATMENT OF MENSTRUAL PROBLEMS USED BY THE TRIBES OF SALUR MANDAL IN VIZIANAGARAM DISTRICT, ANDHRA PRADESH, INDIA

JANARDHANA RAO VALLURU and N. SARADA MANI

Department of Botany, Andhra University, Visakhapatnam-530003, A.P., India.

An Ethnobotanical observation of plants used for the treatment of menstrual problems was carried out in the Salur Mandal of Vizianagaram district, A.P, India. The data have been collected from the local priests, vaidyas, herbal doctors, elderly peoples through an interview. Information collected has revealed 15 plant species that are used for treatment of menstrual problems by the tribes. These plants belong to 15 different families. Leaves, roots are the commonest parts of plants used, while decoction and paste are the main methods of preparation. *Aristolochia indica* and *Costus speciosus* were the most commonly used plant species for the treatment of menstrual disorders by the tribes.

Keywords Medicinal plants; Menstrual problems; Tribes of Salur.

Introduction

There has been phenomenal development in the modern system of medicine in 20th century especially in synthesizing large number of active constituents of plants. This has led to the declining trend in the use of medicinal plants and crude drugs in the developed countries. However, plants occupy an important position as raw material for some of important drugs used in modern medicine. Lately, developed countries also realized the fact that herbal medicines are generally safe and free from side effects. Use of plants for medicinal remedies is an integral part of the Indian cultural life and this is unlikely to change in the years to come¹⁻¹⁰. Among the female gynecological diseases treated with medicinal plants are menstrual problems which are probably the most frequent physiological alterations. Every month thousands of females struggle from these problems. Traditional vaidyas and herbalists in the Salur mandal of Vizianagaram district have been treating the females suffering from menstrual problems. Despite the long history of menstrual treatment using herbal remedies by the tribes, the knowledge and experience of these herbalists have not been scientifically documented.

Habitat degradation and manmade extinction of species are the order of the day. This bio depletion is due to the exponential growth of human population and exploitation of natural resources in an unsustainable way. There is a need for accurate scientific documentation of the knowledge and experience of these herbalists. In this

article we report the information gathered from traditional and elder rural dwellers on plants used in the tribes of Salur for the treatment of menstrual problems.

Material and Methods

The study area located between 17°-45'-19°-10' N and 83°-00'-83°-50' E and bounded on the south by Bay of Bengal, on the north by Koraput district of Orissa state. Information given here was collected from herbalists, traditional healers and elder people in the Salur tribal area. Information was compiled through scientifically guided discussion, interviews and general conversations. Although informants were not scientifically literate, they were born in the region had lived there for most of their lives. The plants were initially identified by their vernacular names through consultation with the local people. Herbarium sheets were prepared and deposited in the herbarium of department of Botany, A.U. Waltair. Specimens were identified with the help of the local standard flora.

Results and Discussion

Results of this study have revealed 15 plant species belonging to 15 families that are frequently used for traditional of menstrual problems by herbalists, traditional vaidyas and people of Salur, Vizianagaram district, A.P, India (Table 1). It was observed that some plants have more than one vernacular name. The reason for this is because the same plant is prepared in different ways in different communities to treat different ailments.

The method of preparation varies; decoction and paste are the most frequently used methods of preparation

Table 1. Plants used for treatment of menstrual problems in salur Tribes

S.No	Species name	Local name	Part used	Mode of administration
1	<i>Aloe barbadensis</i> mill. Liliaceae	Musambram	Leaves	Pulp of leaves is given with honey for 5-7 days to cure irregular menstruation.
2	<i>Amaranthus viridis</i> L. Amaranthaceae	Chilaka thotakura	Root	Root paste is recommended to treat leucorrhoea
3	<i>Argemone mexicana</i> L. Papavaraceae	Balu rakkasi	Root	Root paste is taken orally
4	<i>Aristolochia indica</i> L. Aristolochiaceae	Nagasaram	Root	Roots are pounded and infused in water and taken orally
5	<i>Cassia obtusifolia</i> L. Caesalpinaceae	Tentummokka	Leaves	Decoction is made from leaves, warmed gently and taken orally for several days
6	<i>Costus speciosus</i> (Kooening ex. Retz.) Costaceae	Bogachhika dumpa	Rhizome	Fresh tubers are boiled in water and the decoction is taken orally
7	<i>Curculigo orchioides</i> Gaertn. Hypoxidaceae	Nalathadi	Root	Root is ground along with dried ginger and it is taken orally
8	<i>Dendrophoe falcate</i> . (Linn.f.) Loranthaceae	Bhajinika	Haustoria	The haustoria is crushed and the extract is given orally
9	<i>Eclipta prostrate</i> L. Asteraceae	Gunta kalagara	Leaves	Crushed leaves are boiled in water and taken orally
10	<i>Hybanthus enneaspermus</i> L. violaceae	Ratnalu	Root	Dried plants are powdered and infused in water and then taken orally
11	<i>Momordica dioca</i> Roxb. Cucurbitaceae	Angakara	Rhizome	Rhizome paste is taken orally
12	<i>Oxalis corniculata</i> L. Oxalidaceae	Pamukannu	Leaves	Plant leaves made into paste and is given orally
13	<i>Solanum surrattense</i> Burm.f. Solanaceae	Matti vanga	Fruit	Crushed fruits are boiled in water and administered orally
14	<i>Syzygium cumini</i> L. Skeel Myrtaceae	Neredu	Stem bark	Stem bark decoction given orally
15	<i>Tinospora cordifolia</i> (Willd.) Hook.f Menispermaceae	Tippa tega	Stem bark	Stem bark decoction is taken orally

(Table 1). Leaves and roots were reported to be the most frequently parts of plants used for treatment of menstrual problems constituting about 60% of the preparations. This is followed by rhizome and stem barks constituting 13.3%, while fruit and haustoria contribute about 12.2% of the herbal preparations.

Medicinal plants used in local healthcare traditions are gradually becoming extinct due to over utilization, population explosion and for other anthropogenic reasons. In order to reverse this trend domestication of these medicinal plants is of utmost importance. Popular species which are slow growing and slow – reproducing, such as *Costus speciosus* and *Aristolochia indica*, are frequently used in traditional medicine, are particularly threatened by overexploitation and recognized by the herbalists as becoming scarce. Successful implementation of alternative harvesting methods of these plants and sustainable development is generally likely to involve non Governmental agencies and Governmental agencies working closely with local people. Encouragement of cultivation is likely to be useful, in order to take the pressure off, thus helping to conserve genetic diversity. This could be through the development of small nurseries *in situ*, so as to propagate the species and reintroduce them where population is low.

Conclusion

This study revealed that medicinal plants plays a vital role in the primary health care of the people. The information gathered from the tribal is useful for further research in the field of Ethno medicine and pharmacology. This study offers a model for studying the relationship between plants and people, within the context of traditional medical system. This study also generated a broad spectrum of information concerning medicinal plants for

menstrual problems used by tribes. The results of over exploitation of medicinal plants is felt by those involved with traditional healing, either as collection, traders, traditional practitioners and herbalists. Traditional medicines also have the potential to form the basis of pharmaceutical drugs for the treatment of a range of diseases. Thus, the loss of these potentially valuable genetic resources ultimately affects the whole society.

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