

## SOME PLANTS OF ETHNOPAEDIATRIC IMPORTANCE IN DISTRICT KORAPUT, ORISSA

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## ABSTRACT

Ethnobotanical studies among the Kondh of Koraput district of Orissa state envisaged that some of the herbal medicines are specifically prescribed for children by local medicineman or medicinewoman. Such 18 species like *Crotalaria juncea* Linn., *Elephantopus scaber* Linn., *Gardenia gummifera* Linn., *Diospyros melanoxylon* Roxb., *Bambusa tulda* Roxb. etc. are discussed in this paper.

During the ethnobotanical field study among Kondh at Koraput district, Orissa. the "Desharies" (tribal medicineman) and "Bijunis" (Tribal medicinewoman) have been consulted. They look after the welfare of the tribal society and do the needful for the prosperity of the tribal village too. During the course of studies, besides the "Deshari" and "Bijunis" the local inhibitors have also been contacted and with the help of cross enquiries within the same community of the different villages the collected data were confirmed and authenticated.

The tribals are very conservative in nature and they do not easily mixed up with other communities for exchange or to share their emperic knowledge. They are, by nature, reluctant to go to the hospital and have a great faith and insist on their own traditional system of medicine.

It has been noticed that most of the prescription made by "Desharies" and "Bijunis" are restricted specifically for the treatment of children. They generally prescribe powder, pills, decoction, infusion etc. for various ailments along with worship, divination and exorcism.

As the subject is very poorly known, therefore, the present ethnopaediatric information may prove helpful for further scientific studies. It is envisaged from the published literature that except Altschul (1970) work, perhaps, no other work have been done.

Present paper is a great deal of 18 angiospermic plants employed in the treatment of children. Collected data was compared with the literature on medicinal plants like Watt (1889-93), Kirtikar & Basu (1935), Dastur (1915), Chopra *et al.*, (1956, 1969), Wealth of India (1948-1976). Besides these monumental works the recent ethnobotanical works on Orissa viz. Panigrahi (1963), Mudgal and Pal (1980), Tribedi *et al.*, (1982) and it was found that most of the information are not recorded in above published accounts.

The species are arranged alphabetically by their botanical names followed by families, Kondh name, parts used and the number in brackets indicates the voucher specimen's number. All the specimens are deposited in CNH (CAL).

1. **Abrus precatorius** (Leguminosae)  
"Kaichaamulo" and "Gunjankai"

Eight to ten seeds and roots of *Wrightia tomentosa* Roem. & Schult., about fifteen gm. are grinded into a powder. The powder is equally divided into six to eight doses, which is prescribed orally with honey in empty stomach in fever. (92).

2. **Alangium salvifolium** (L. f.) Wang.  
(Alangiaceae) "Ankul"

Two inches long root is powdered alongwith 7-8 dry fruits of *Ficus religiosa* Linn. and made into four doses. Each dose is prescribed twice

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daily with honey or breast milk in cold, cough and to pass out phlegm. (81).

3. **Bambusa tulda** Roxb. (Gramineae)  
"Baunsh" "Derku".

Dried tender culm is powdered. The powder is mixed with paste ginger and honey and given orally thrice a day for five days in fever. (1718).

4. **Calanthe triplicata** Ames. (Orchidaceae)  
"Musa kanda"

Paste of the tuber and the three seeds of *Piper nigrum* Linn is orally prescribed thrice daily in dysentery. (1522).

5. **Cassia siamea** Lam. (Leguminosae)  
"Badasakunda"

The paste of seeds and the *Piper nigrum* L. seeds in 5 : 1 ratio is prescribed orally with water to stop vomiting. The seeds of *C. occidentalis* Linn. is also used as substitute of the seeds of *C. siamea* Lam. (1516).

6. **Crotalaria juncea** L. (Leguminosae)  
"Uturuli"

Seven pieces of roots of about two to three cm long are tied in a thread and given to wear as garland in malarial fever. The flowers are also used as garland in other fever. (1800).

7. **Desmodium triflorum** (L.) DC. (Leguminosae) "Hapkamara"

Root paste is applied in skin diseases (83).

8. **Diospyros melanoxylon** Roxb. (Ebenaceae)  
"Kendu"

Ten green fruits are boiled in about one liter of water till it comes down to one-fourth. The decoction is orally prescribed in dysentery (85).

9. **Elephantopus scaber** L. (Asteraceae)  
"Mayrichiriae"

Three to five gm of root and three seeds of black pepper are made into paste which is orally given as laxative, whereas the root extract acts as appetizer and given to children of age group below one year (130, 1367).

10. **Gardenia gummifera** L. f. (Rubiaceae)  
"Kumbamara"

The small bark pieces and peacock feathers

are alternately tied with a thread and made as garland which is given to wear on neck to stop vomiting after feeding milk (63).

11. **Justicia betonica** L. (Acanthaceae)  
"Kataali".

Root is applied all over the body to lower down the body temperature during high fever (1556).

12. **Mangifera indica** L. (Anacardiaceae)  
"Amba"

Powder of tender fruits is given with breast milk in dysentery (1341).

13. **Mimosa pudica** L. (Leguminosae)  
"Lajkuli"

The extract of powder roots and leaves is prescribed in fever due to enlargement of spleen. The residue is also applied externally for the same purpose over the stomach (1503).

14. **Oroxylum indicum** Vent. (Bignoniaceae)  
"Papni"

Bark powder with that of rhizome of *Curcuma longa* Linn. in 3 : 1 ratio is given orally in interlunar night to keep away the evil eyes which is believed to cause unconsciousness with high fever (1515).

15. **Pavetta indica** L. (Rubiaceae) "Agamati"

The leaves are boiled in a earthen pot and given to chew with common salt in intermittent fever and cough (80).

16. **Solanum surattense** Burm. f. (Solanaceae)  
"Chakarabhedhi".

Plant paste is kept in ash of cowdung for 5-6 hours which is mixed with the bark powder of *Ficus religiosa* Linn. in equal ratio and is given twice daily for ten days in hooping cough.

Powder of roasted twig is prescribed orally with honey twice daily for seven days in cough (77, 1517).

17. **Urena lobata** L. (Malvaceae) "Chikni"

The leaves and fruits are burnt into ash. The ash is mixed with the oil of *Linum usitatissimum* Linn. and the paste is applied locally on wounds on head (1505).

**18. *Vicoa indica* DC. (Asteraceae) "*Banaalosi*".**

The plant is burnt into ash. The ash is mixed with the oil of *Brassica campestris* Linn and the paste is locally applied on wounds and in eczema below the knees.

#### DISCUSSION

Eighteen species belonging to eighteen genera and twelve families are employed in different ailments by the tribal people of Koraput. Altschul (1970) assessed the same from herbarium specimens deposited in Harvard University. It is seen that the family Leguminosae came to the first position in treating children, the field survey also envisages the same. In the country like India where the death rate of children, particularly in rural area is much more higher than the other developed countries, hence, the scope of this type of study is very promising and it may give new source of drug plants in paediatric diseases.

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