

ETHNOMEDICOBOTANY OF UTTARA KANNADA DISTRICT, KARNATAKA STATE

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A B S T R A C T

In India, Western Ghat is one of the biodiversity hotspots. The total number of flowering plants in this area is estimated to be more than 3500. Many of these plants are having important healing properties, which are unknown to the modern world. However, the rich knowledge of traditional herbal medicine has been preserved by many of the tribal and rural communities of this locality. The present work is focused on ethnomedical knowledge of different communities of Uttara Kannada district in Karnataka state which is situated in the heart of Western Ghats. In all, thirty plants, having highest utilization in folk medicines are described here. These plants are used to treat wide range of discomforts ranging from cough and cold, leprosy, jaundice, and cancer. Among these plants *Calotropis gigantea* (43 claims), *Tinospora cordifolia* (42 claims), *Sida rhombifolia* (42 claims) and *Ficus glomerata* (39 claims) are the most widely used plants in native medicine.

INTRODUCTION

Uttara Kannada District (13° 55' 15° 31' N latitude and 74°09' 75°04' E longitude), is one of the 30 districts of Karnataka. Except the documentation of medicinal plants used by the tribes like Siddis (Bhandari *et.al*, 1995) and Gowlis (Bhandari *et. al*, 1996), there are no ethno-botanical investigations and systematic documentation of folklore medicines of this district. Therefore, an attempt is made to document the ethnomedicobotany of Uttara Kannada District.

METHODOLOGY

Regular field trips were made to the area in different seasons during 1999-2001. During these visits, information about the plants used in folklore medicine were recorded through the discussions and interviews with the aged people and the herbal practitioners belonging to different tribes and communities. After authentic identification of the plants, herbarium of the plant specimens were prepared and have been deposited in Department of Botany, Karnataka University, Dharwad. Apart from this, the published literature available about the traditional herbal medicine in local language of the study area was taken as the secondary source.

Based on the information collected, only 30 plants are described here, which are having maximum claims to cure different diseases.

RESULTS

Plants are arranged in alphabetical order of the botanical name. The family name, local name (LN) and Sanskrit name (SN) is given to each plant along with the diseases, which it claims to cure. The ailments marked with asterisk (*) indicates the new claims.

Achyranthes aspera L. (Amaranthaceae) L.N: Uttarane. S.N: Apamarga.

Whole plant: Influenza, Skin diseases, Emmenagogue*, Asthma, Earache, Itches, Insect bites, Cough and cold, Tonsillitis*, Conception.

Root: Postnatal treatments, Piles, Poisonous bites, Jaundice, Conjunctivitis, Snake bite, Toothache, Easy delivery, Eczema, Emmenagogue*, Asthma, Skin diseases, Tonic.

Leaf: Diarrhoea, Dysentery, Refrangent, Deafness.

Seeds: Conception, Urinary diseases, Headache.

Adhatoda vasica Nees (Acanthaceae) L.N: Aadusoge. S.N: Vasaka.

Root: Vermifuge, Bone fractures*, Dysentery, Cough, Malaria, Fever, Typhoid, Eczema, Gonorrhea, Asthma, Skin diseases.

Leaf: Shoulder pain, Tuberculosis, Conception*, Paralysis*, Fever, Hysteria, Vomiting, Diarrhoea, Rheumatism, Emmenagogue, Urinary tract infection, Itches, Cough, Malaria, Diabetes, Headache, Whooping cough, Boils, Blood pressure, Sinusitis, Toothache, Oxytocic*, Earache, Giddiness, Wounds, Eczema, Herpes, Asthma, Corneal infections, Cold.

Alangium salvifolium (L.f.) Wang (Alangiaceae) L.N: Ankole. S.N: Nikothaka.

Root: Dogs bite, Mouse bite, Leech bite, Itches, Fever, Earache*, Wounds, Snake bite, Child treatments, Skin diseases, Postnatal treatments.

Bark: Food poisoning, Dysentery.

Fruit: Asthma.

Areca catechu L. (Arecaceae) L.N: Adike. S.N: Puga.

Root: Piles*, Oxytocic, Anaemia*, Whooping cough, Postnatal treatments, Poisonous bites.

Stem: Urinary complaints, Boils, Blood purifier*, Conception, Emmenagogue.

Fruit: Aphtha, Emmenagogue, Leprosy*, Earache, Head ache, Tooth ache, Dysentery, Scorpion bite, Uterine contraction.

Aristolochia indica L. (Aristolochiaceae) L.N: Eeshwari. S.N: Arkamula.

Root: Postnatal treatments, Constipation*, Diarrhoea, Appendicitis, Mouse bite, Vermifuge, Eczema, Hysteria, Tonsillitis*, Vomiting, Emmenagogue, Diabetes*, Poisonous bites, Typhoid, Cracks, Itches, Eye diseases, Cough, Hernia*, Headache, Blood purifier*, Cold, Toothache, Dog bite, Skin diseases, Influenza, Mental disorders.

Asteracantha longifolia Nees. (Acanthaceae) L.N: Kolavalike. S.N: Kokilaksha.

Whole plant: Haematuria, Cuts and wounds*, Urinary problems.

Root: Dysuria, Fever, Anaemia, Cramps.

Seeds: Galactagogue*, Vaginal contraction, Polyuria, Jaundice.

Caesalpinia crista L. (Caesalpinaceae) L.N: Gajjuga. S.N: Karanja, Varini.

Leaf: Backache*, Dysentery, Carminative.

Seed: Postnatal treatments, Leucorrhoea, Conception, Vermifuge, Dysentery, Carminative, Hernia*, Rheumatism, Emmenagogue, Diabetes, Itches, Aphtha*, Bubo, Eczema, Snakebite, Brain tonic, To increase sperm count, Eye disorders.

Calotropis gigantea (L.) Br. (Asclepiadaceae) L.N: Ekke. S.N: Arka.

Root: Postnatal treatments, Aphtha, Tuberculosis*, Migraine*, Tonsillitis, Hernia*, Conception, Weakness, Jaundice, Cold, Mental disorders, Dog bite, Skin diseases, Eczema, Throat infections, To increase sperm count*, Fever, Pneumonia.

Leaf: Rickets*, Fever, Dysuria*, Rheumatism, Earache, Headache*, Wounds, Asthma, Tetanus, Whooping cough, Eye diseases, Pyorrhea.

Latex : Antiseptic, Asthma, Bubo, Dog bite, Leprosy, Eczema, Itches, Boils, Cracks.

Careya arborea Roxb. (Lecythidaceae) L.N: Koulu. S.N: Kumbhi.

Bark: Mastitis, Cracks, Diarrhoea, Dysentery, Appendicitis*, Emmenagogue, Piles*, Body ache, Itches, Jaundice*, Ear problems, Boils, Burns, Leucorrhoea.

Celastrus paniculatus Willd. (Celastraceae) L. N: Gange balli. S.N: Jyotishmathi.

Root: Child treatments, Conception*, Mastitis, Paralysis, Carbuncle, Influenza, Tonsillitis*, Liver disorders, Brain tonic, Cough, Poisonings, Ulcers, Headache, Fever, Eczema, Blood purifier, Polio, Pneumonia, Diabetes*, Leucoderma.

Bark: Eczema, Toothache*, Skin diseases.

Seeds: Hysteria, Sciatic pains, Emmenagogue, Skin diseases.

Centella asiatica (L.) Urban (Apiaceae) L.N: Ondelaga. S.N: Mandukaparni.

Whole plant: Brain tonic, Dyspepsia, Weakness, Fever, Emmenagogue, Constipation*, Hernia*, Liver disorders, Hair falling, Eye problems, Cough and Cold, Mental disorders, Easy delivery, Postnatal treatment, Blood pressure*, Asthma, White discharge, Whooping cough, Pneumonia, Prostrate gland infection, Sinusitis.

Centratherum anthelminticum O.Kuntz. (Asteraceae) L.N: Kaadu jeerige. S.N: Vanajeeraka.

Fruit: Postnatal treatments, Tetanus*, Vermifuge, Carbuncle, Whitlow, Carminative, Dysuria, Itches, Cancer*, Hair falling, Skin diseases, Cough, Wounds, Burns, Eczema, Rheumatism*, To increase sperm count, Pneumonia.

Datura metel L. (Solanaceae) L.N: Ummatta. S.N: Unmatta.

Root: Convulsions, Rheumatism, Jaundice, Mumps, Dog bite, Toothache, Asthma, Tetanus*.

Leaf: Inflammations, Back ache, Paralysis*, Convulsions, Mouse bite, Rheumatism, Mastalgia, jaundice, Boils, Itches, Mumps, Dog bites, Headache, Tetanus*, Cold, Wounds.

Seed: Aphrodisiac, Asthma, Rheumatism, Eczema, Earache, Itches, Hysteria, Paralysis, Migraine.

Ficus benghalensis L. (Moraceae) L.N: Aala. S.N: Vata.

Root: Urinary disorders, Cough.

Bark: Conception, Aphtha, Debility, Emmenagogue, Piles, Dysuria, Diabetes, Fever, To prevent miscarriage, Dysentery, Diarrhea, Blood purifier, Aphrodisiac, To increase sperm count, Refrignent, Leucoderma, Burns, Gonorrhea.

Latex: Rickets*, Leprosy, Anti inflammatory, Emmenagogue.

Leaf: Conception, Insect bite*, Piles, Paralysis*.

Ficus racemosa L. (Moraceae) L.N: Atti. S.N: Udumbara.

Root: Piles, Kidney stones, Wounds, Eczema, Rheumatism*.

Bark: Aphtha*, Anti-inflammatory, Dysentery, Urinary infections, Fever, Hysteria, Piles, Cough, Diabetes, Brain hammarhage, Coolant, Bubo, Leucoderma, Burns, Gonorrhea, Earache, Pneumonia, Sedative, Leucorrhoea, Appendicitis*.

Latex: Rickets*, Migraine*, Carbuncle, Coolant, Leprosy, Boils, Cuts & wounds, Hernia*, Leucorrhoea, Liver disorders.

Leaf: Diarrhoea, dysentery.

Fruit: Diarrhoea, Piles, conception, Diabetes, Asthma, Dysentery.

Ficus religiosa L. (Moraceae) L.N: Ashwattha. S.N: Ashwattha

Root: Conception, Eczema.

Bark: Hiccough, Conception, Diarrhoea, Dysentery, Acidity, Vomiting, Rickets, Piles*, Diabetes*, Pimples*, Whooping cough, Hair dye, Leucoderma, Burns, Fever, Blood Pressure, Gonorrhea, Asthma, Pneumonia, Leucorrhoea, Ear problems.

Leaf: Diarrhoea, Paralysis*, Urinary disorders, Vomiting, Piles*, Corneal ulcers, Burns, Brain tonic, Snakebite, Sinusitis.

Fruit: Burns, Asthma, Aphrodisiac.

Holarrhena antidysenterica Wall. (Apocynaceae) L.N: Kodashiga. S.N: Kutaja.

Root: Vomiting, Itches, Insect poisoning*, Vermifuge, To increase sperm count, Tonic.

Bark: Diarrhoea, Dysentery, Dyspepsia, Carminative, Postnatal treatments, Vaginal contraction, Vermifuge, Syphilis*, Pyorrhea, Boils, Jaundice, Blood purifier, Gonorrhea, Cough and cold, Diabetes*.

Leaf: Mastitis, Snake bite.

Seed: Fever, Malaria, Vermifuge, Eczema.

Ixora coccinea L. (Rubiaceae) L.N: Kusumaale. S.N: Raktaka.

Root: Postnatal treatments, Syphilis, skin diseases, Aphtha*, Dysentery, Influenza, Urinary disorders, Carminative, Kidney Problems, Itches, Diabetes*, Boils, Blood pressure*, Emmenagogue, To increase sperm count, Leucorrhoea.

Bark: Skin diseases, Aphtha*.

Flower / Fruit: Anxiety, Dysentery, Eye and Ear problems, Aphrodisiac, Cold,

Jatropha curcas L. (Euphorbiaceae) L.N: Beli oudalu. S.N: Mushikaparni.

Bark: Postnatal treatments, Dyspepsia, Herpes, Diarrhoea, Dysentery, Vomiting, Hair falling*, Skin diseases, Asthma*, Toothache.

Latex: Whitlow, Toothache, Cuts and Wounds, Rheumatism.

Fruit/ Seed: Rheumatism, Throat pain.

Memecylon malabaricum Cogn. (Melastomataceae) L.N: Gandu kusumaale. S.N: Anjani.

Root: Postnatal treatments, Dysentery, Conception, Herpes*, Eczema, Urinary problems, Itches, Toothache, Child weakness.

Plumbago zeylanica L. (Plumbaginaceae) L.N: Chitramoola. S.N: Agnimantha.

Root: Inflammations, Bubo, Syphilis*, Paralysis, Sciatic pain, Emmenagogue*, Piles, Cough, Eczema, Diabetes*, Typhoid, Jaundice, Mumps, Boils, Easy delivery, Ulcers, Stomachache, Headache, Ring worm, Skin diseases, Leucorrhoea, Dysentery, Blood purifier, Throat pain, Rheumatism.

Leaf: Inflammations, Bubo, Mastitis, Toothache, Skin diseases.

Pongamia glabra Vent. (Papilionaceae) L.N: Honge. S.N: Goura, Kakaghni.

Root: Diarrhoea, Diabetes, Hernia.

Bark: Child treatments, Postnatal treatments, Mouse bite*, Influenza, Malaria, Itches, Toothache, To increase sperm count, To prevent miscarriage, Eczema, Dysentery, Rheumatism, White discharge.

Leaf: Vomiting*, Cough, Leucoderma, Herpes.

Seed: Conjunctivitis, Ear problems, Eczema, Whooping Cough.

Rauvolfia serpentina Benth. (Apocynaceae) L.N: Sarpagandhi. S.N: Sarpagandhi

Root: Herpes*, Hair falling*, Eczema, Carbuncle, Hysteria, Tonsillitis*, Cough, Itches, Dog bite, Ulcers, Earache, All types of Poisonous bites, Blood pressure, Blood Purifier, Throat pain, Rheumatism*, To increase sperm count, Mental disorders.

Ricinus communis L. (Euphorbiaceae) L.N: Haralu. S.N: Chitraka.

Root: Postnatal treatments, Dyspepsia, Hernia, Emetic*, Constipation, Piles, Dysuria, Cough and cold, Giddiness, Headache, Easy delivery.

Leaf: Tonic, Insomnia, Jaundice, Bubo, Rheumatism, Cramps.

Seed: Aphtha*, Cracks, Vermifuge, Hysteria, Pimples, Conjunctivitis, Boils, Hair falling, Stomachache, Blood pressure*, Blood purifier, Rheumatism.

Salacia prinoidea DC. (Celastraceae) L.N: Eekanaayaka. S.N: Eekanaayaka.

Root: Fever, Paralysis*, Dysentery, Carminative, Constipation, Piles*, Urinary disorders, Diabetes, Typhoid, Jaundice, Cough, Vermifuge*, Emmenagogue, Fat reduction, Blood pressure*, Blood purifier, Rheumatism, Gonorrhea, To increase sperm count, Liver tonic, Leucorrhoea.

Sapindus emarginatus Vahl (Sapindaceae) L.N: Antavaala. S.N: Rakthabija.

Root: Poisonous bites, Boils, Cancer.

Bark: Boils, Skin diseases*.

Fruit: Cracks in feet, Convulsions, Eczema, Itches, Bronchitis*, Headache, Throat infection, Skin diseases, Dog bite, Whooping cough, Postnatal treatments, Vermifuge, Blood purifier*.

Sida rhombifolia L. (Malvaceae) L.N: Kallangadle. S.N: Bala, Atibala.

Whole plant: Post natal treatments, Galactagogue*, Emmenagogue*, Conception, Polyuria, Dysentery, Urinary problems, Bone fractures*, Nervine weakness, Liver disorders, Toothache, To prevent miscarriage, Easy delivery, Rheumatism, Polio*, Insomnia*, Liver disorders.

Root: Polyuria, Ulcer, Dyspepsia, Weakness, fever, Influenza, Emmenagogue*, Tonic, Constipation*, Piles, Kidney stones, Wounds, Typhoid, Cough, Stomachache, Carminative, Blood pressure, To increase breast, Gonorrhea, White discharge, To increase sperm count.

Leaf: Rickets, Dysentery, Night blindness, Diabetes, Jaundice*, Boils, Sciatic pains.

Strychnos nux-vomica L. (Loganiaceae) L.N: Kaasaraka. S.N: Vishamusthi.

Root: White discharge, Bowels, Vermifuge*, Carbuncle, Emmenagogue, Cracks, Snake bite, Scorpion bite.

Bark: Paralysis, Itches, Pimples, Rheumatism.

Leaf: Carbuncle, Conjunctivitis, Blood purifier*, Headache*.

Fruit / Seeds: Dog bite, Heart diseases, Headache*, Blood pressure*.

Tinospora cordifolia (Willd.) Hook.f. & Thoms. (Menispermaceae) L.N: Amrutha balli. S.N: Amritavalli.

Stem: Postnatal treatment, Mental disorders, To stimulate conception, Polyuria, Ulcer, Paralysis*, Debility, Convulsions, Acidity, Fever, Eczema, Rheumatism, Vomiting, Emmenagogue, Malaria, Diabetes, Typhoid, Cancer*, Jaundice, Itches, Blood pressure*, Conjunctivitis, Dog bite, Heart diseases, Stomachache, Ear ache, Headache, To stop miscarriage, Snakebite, Skin diseases, Blood purifier, Weakness, Herpes, Asthma, To increase sperm count, Whooping cough, Pneumonia, Cough and cold, Hysteria.

Withania somnifera (L.) Dunal (Solanaceae) L.N: Ashwagandha. S.N: Ashwagandha.

Root: Debility, Hemorrhage*, Impotency, Vaginal contraction, Dyspepsia, Paralysis*, Convulsions*, Fever, Diabetes, Typhoid, Blood pressure, Heart problems, To stop abortion, Easy delivery, Eczema, To increase breast, Back pain, Gonorrhea, Polio, Herpes*, Asthma, To increase sperm count, Cold, Tonic.

Bark: Dysentery, Fever, Hysteria.

CONCLUSIONS

Even though the modern medicines are very popular, the local herbal medicine has still got its own importance in rural areas. In the present work, once again it is established that herbal medicines are used to treat wide range of discomforts and there is a need of still more ethnobotanical survey of the area to get the complete picture of herbal

knowledge of Uttara Kannada District. However, further biochemical, pharmacological and clinical studies are needed to prove their efficacy.

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