Indian Journal of Traditional Knowledge
Vol. 6(4), October 2007, pp. 574-578

Ethnomedicinal information from Kattunayakas tribes of Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary, Nilgiris district, Tamil Nadu

PS Udayan*, KV Tushar, Satheesh George & Indira Balachandran
Centre for Medicinal Plants Research (CMPR), Arya Vaidya Sala, Kottakkal, Changuvettu, Kottakkal 676 503, Malappuram district, Kerala
E-mail: avscmpr@sify.com / avscmpr@yahoo.co.in
Received 16 September 2005; revised 16 February 2006

The paper enumerates the traditional uses of some plants used by the Kattunayaka tribes of Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary of Nilgiris district, Tamil Nadu. Information on the medicinal uses of 37 plants gathered from the tribals along with their botanical identity is highlighted.

Keywords: Medicinal plants, Kattunayaka, Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary, Ethnomedicine, Tamil Nadu
IPC Int. Cl:*: A61K36/00, A61P1/04, A61P1/08, A61P1/14, A61P1/16, A61P3/06, A61P11/00, A61P11/10, A61P17/00, A61P17/06, A61P17/08, A61P19/00, A61P19/02, A61P19/10, A61P25/00, A61P25/08, A61P29/00, A61P29/02, A61P31/00, A61P39/02

Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary is located in Nilgiris district of Tamil Nadu state, adjacent to the Bandipur Wildlife Sanctuary of Kollegal district of Karnataka (Fig.1). It lies on the North-eastern slopes of the Nilgiri range and the terrain is undulating. The name Mudumalai stands for the ancient hill range that descends down to the Mysore plateau and is contiguous with Bandipur forest reserve, which gives a wider access to elephants and gours. The flora of Nilgiris district describes 877 plant species belonging to 429 genera of 117 families¹. This district harbours a rich plant diversity, both exotic and native, which has substantial healing utility. The six major ethnic groups of anthropological interest in the region are Todas, Kotas, Kurumbas, Irulas, Paniyas and Kattunayakas. The total tribal population of the Nilgiris district was 25,048, of which Kattunayakas population constituted 1400². These ethnic groups inhabited the Western Ghats from 700 BC and in the Nilgiris from 1200 BC³. In order to explore the medicinal wealth of this area, an ethnobotanical exploration was carried out in the Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary. The study area is located near Gudalur taluk of Nilgiris district in Tamil Nadu situated at 11°33′–11°39′N latitude and 76°23′-76°43′E longitude with an altitude ranging from 600-1000 m above msl. The temperature goes down up to 4°C during the winter season and rises up to 30°C during the summer months. The annual rainfall ranges from 800-1800 mm. The forest types are mixed deciduous, dry deciduous and dry thorny⁶.

Methodology
The information was gathered from Bomman, a 55 yrs old Nattuvaidya of the Kattunayaka community residing in Pulpalli tribal colony, Mudumalai (Fig. 2). Such plants were collected, tagged and entered in the field data book together with botanical notes for herbarium specimens Figs 3-8). All the species were identified and the voucher specimens were deposited in the CMPR herbarium.

Results and discussion
During the survey 37 plant species were identified, which are being used by the tribal community of that area for primary healthcare. The species are arranged in alphabetical order with details such as plant name, family, local name, and uses. The Kattunayaka community has been using these plants to treat a number of ailments and diseases. However, due to lack of proper documentation, the knowledge is being lost. Hence, proper documentation and preservation of the tribal knowledge on medicinal plants is a vital necessity. Few studies have been carried out and listed out 19 plant species used by the Kattunayaka community⁷. The paper adds up further to the initiative and provides uses on 37 plant species.

*Corresponding author
**Acacia caesia** (L.) Willd. (Mimosaceae); **Kari Indu**
Uses: Stem bark decoction is used for taking bath to get relief from body pain. Leaves are used as vegetable.

**Asparagus racemosus** Willd. (Asparagaceae); **Ammaikodi**
Uses: Fresh tuber is taken internally twice a day for one week against stomachache.

**Blumea lacera** (Burm.f.) DC. (Asteraceae); **Navakkaranadai**
Uses: Leaf paste prepared by mixing with mother's milk is applied over the eye twice a day for two weeks for improving vision.

**Cassia fistula** L. (Caesalpiniaceae); **Konnei**
Uses: Stem bark decoction is taken twice a day for two days against stomachache.

**Catunaregam spinosa** (Thunb.) Tirvengadum (Rubiaceae); **Madukarei**
Uses: Equal proportions of root paste along with the stem bark extract of **Nelli** (**Phyllanthus emblica**) is taken in empty stomach for two weeks against ulcers.

**Celastrus paniculatus** Willd. (Celastraceae); **Valulurai**
Uses: Root paste is applied externally once a day for 15 days to get relief from body pain.

**Chromolaena odorata** (L.) King & Robins. (Asteraceae); **Vettukkaya pacha**
Uses: Leaf juice is applied externally for one week to heal cuts and wounds.

**Cissampelos pareira** L. var. **hirsuta** (Ham. ex DC.) Forman (Menispermacaeae); **Pulipancheddi**
Uses: Leaf paste is applied on forehead for 2 hrs to recover from unconsciousness and anaemia.

**Curcuma longa** L. (Zingiberaceae); **Manjal**
Uses: Mixture of rhizome powder (20 gm), 5 gm lime (**CaCO3**) and 10 gm salt is applied externally twice a day for two days against scorpion bite.

**Cyclea peltata** (Lam.) Hook. f. & Thomson (Menispermacaeae); **Para**
Uses: Tuber paste is applied externally once a day for 3 days against body pain.

**Elephantopus scaber** L. (Asteraceae); **Anashovadi**
Uses: Root paste (20 gm) along with 5 gm jeera (**Cuminum cyminum**) and 10 gm garlic (**Allium sativum**) is taken internally in empty stomach for 4 days against stomachache.

**Flemingia strobilifera** (L.) R. Br. ex Ait. (Fabaceae); **Kaduthuvarai**
Uses: 100 gm paste prepared from the whole plant is applied on forehead twice a day for one month to get relief from mental disorders.

**Grewia tiliifolia** Vahl. (Tiliaceae); **Unu**
Uses: Root bark paste is applied externally thrice a day for one week over swellings.

**Hemidesmus indicus** (L.) R. Br. (Periplocaceae); **Nammari**
Uses: Paste prepared from the root is applied twice a day for 4 days to get relief from mouth ulcers.

**Holostemma ada-kodien** Schult. (Asclepiadaceae); **Ada kizhangu**
Uses: Paste prepared from the tuber is applied twice a day for 3 days against fever.

**Hyptis suaveolens** (L.) Poit. (Lamiaceae); **Kattu tulasi**
Uses: Whole plant paste is applied externally four times a day for 3 days to get relief from fever.

**Jatropha curcas** L. (Euphorbiaceae); **Kaatu amanku**
Uses: Tender leaves gently passed over flame for few seconds are immediately tied on the forehead against headache.

**Lantana camara** L. (Verbenaceae); **Unni shedi**
Uses: Whole plant paste along with culm sheaths of bamboo is applied externally twice a day for 4 days against cuts and wounds.
Lagestroemia microcarpa Wight (Lythraceae); Tindiyam
Uses: Charcoal of the bark is applied externally over the burns twice a day for two weeks.

Leucas indica (L.) R. Br. ex Vatke (Lamiaceae); Mosappullu
Uses: 20 gm leaf paste prepared in one tumbler cow’s milk is taken internally once a day for one week against cough.

Mimosa pudica L. (Mimosaceae); Thotalvadi
Uses: Paste prepared from the whole plant is applied externally twice a day for one week against body pain.

Phyllanthus amarus Schum. & Thonn. (Euphorbiaceae); Kila nelli
Uses: 15 ml whole plant juice is taken internally in empty stomach along with one tumbler goat’s milk against jaundice.

Phyllanthus emblica L. (Euphorbiaceae); Nelli
Uses: Two fruits are consumed internally daily for one week against stomachache.

Piper betle L. (Piperaceae); Thabulam
Uses: 50 gm of whole plant ground along with 10 gm lime, one paakku (Areca catechu) and a small piece of pukayilai (Nicotiana tabacum) is applied externally thrice a day for one week against cuts and wounds.

Pterocarpus marsupium Roxb. (Combretaceae); Vengai
Uses: Exudates from the stem is applied over the body twice a day for one month against rheumatic pain.

Radermackera xylocarpa (Roxb.) K. Schum. (Bignoniaceae); Vadencarni
Uses: Stem bark paste is applied externally thrice a day for three days over the forehead against fever.

Rauvolfia serpentina (L.) Benth. ex Kurz (Apocynaceae); Chivanamelpodi
Uses: 10 gm root paste m is taken twice a day for two days against stomachache.

Securinega virosa (Wild.) Baill. (Euphorbiaceae); Pula
Uses: Root paste applied externally against knee and joint pain.

Sida rhombifolia L. (Malvaceae); Chitra mutti
Uses: Root decoction is applied externally twice a day for one month to get relief from rheumatic pain.

Tectona grandis L.f. (Verbenaceae); Thekku
Uses: 20 gm stem bark paste mixed with one tumbler of water is taken internally after dinner for one week against stomach ache and dysentery.

Terminalia bellirica (Gaertn.) Roxb. (Combretaceae); Tani
Uses: Charred bark made into paste is applied externally thrice a day for two weeks against body pain.

Terminalia chebula Retz. (Combretaceae); Kadukai
Uses: Paste prepared from the fruits is applied externally thrice a day for one week against muscular dislocation.

Terminalia crenulata Heyne ex Roth (Combretaceae); Karimathi
Uses: 10 gm stem bark juice is taken internally twice a day for three days against internal bleeding.

Tridax procumbens L. (Asteraceae); Vettukkaya thalai
Uses: Leaf paste is applied externally against sores.

Ziziphus mauritiana Lam. (Rhamnaceae); Ilantha
Uses: Steam coming out during boiling of 200 ml plant juice along with 10 fruits of Nelli (Phyllanthus emblica) is used as a mouth freshener.

Acknowledgement
Authors are thankful to the authorities of Arya Vaidya Sala (AVS), Kottakkal & Sir Dorabji Tata Trust, Mumbai for the financial support; Dr PN Ravindran, Visiting Scientist, CMPR for his constant encouragement; the authorities of Tamil Nadu Forest Department & Mr Ashok Upreti IFS, Wildlife Warden, Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary, Nilgiris district for the permission and logistical support. Authors also thank Mr NK Janardhanan, staff of AVS Herb Garden, for assistance in the field. Authors express gratitude to Mr Bomman, tribal man of the Kattunayaka community for the help and information during the field trip.

References


6 Champion HG & Seth SK, *A Revised Survey of the Forest Types of India*, (Forest Research Institute, Manager of Publications, Delhi), 1968.