Medicinal plants in Folk medicine for Women’s diseases in use by Konda Reddis

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Thirty seven plant species belonging to 28 families employed ethnomedicinally by Konda Reddis for treating various women diseases and reproductive ailments are reported along with local names of the plant species, method of preparation, mode of administration and dosage.

Keywords: Phytotherapy, Women disorders, Konda Reddis, Andhra Pradesh

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Plant kingdom is a blessing as well as a boon from God to living beings on this planet. Primitive man got much enthusiasm towards green plants and started to examine the properties of useful plants. Later, he became enriched with the knowledge of many useful and harmful plants. Much of the present information about the medicinal value of plants has come from the knowledge gathered by the aboriginals since the tribes especially Konda Reddis inhabit forests and hill tracks. They depend on the forest herbs and trees for curing various types of diseases and ailments. A thorough ethnobotanical survey was conducted among the Konda Reddis of Andhra Pradesh, as only meagre ethnomedicinal work has been done in this area1, 2.

Study area
The study area lies between 17°-30’ to 18° N latitudes and 80°-47’ to 82°-30’ E longitudes. Red ferruginous soil predominates, but there are also patches of heavy black soil. Lying close to the sea, the study area is subject to both the Southwest and Southeast monsoon. The driest time of the year is from March to May. The coldest weather with chilly nights lasts only from December to the end of the January.

Andhra Pradesh is inhabited by 6,024,104 of tribal people, constitute 6.59% of total population. The total population of Konda Reddi tribe is 27,124.. Konda Reddis are inhabiting on either bank of the river Godavari in the hilly and forest tracts of East Godavari, Khammam and West Godavari districts of Andhra Pradesh. They are also found scattered in Warangal and Visakhapatnam districts. Reddis are essentially a hill people and their home is the high valleys of the main ranges, the slopes and spurs of foot hills, and narrow gorges of the Godavari. They occupy more remote and mountainous areas characterized by small close knit communities. Konda Reddis are also known as Hill Reddis. They call themselves as Pandava Reddis and they are one of the most primitive tribes of Andhra Pradesh. They are in practice of shifting cultivation.

Literature studies revealed some of the notable works 3-22. But as per the present observations, the method of application of various plant species for curative purposes in gynaecological problems is quite interesting.

Methodology
Ethnobotanical surveys were undertaken for a period of 3 yrs from 2006-2008 in 43 interior tribal pockets with good forest cover. Interviews were conducted with Konda Reddi tribe people at their dwellings. During oral interviews, specific questions were asked, and the information supplied by the informants was noted. The knowledgeable informants were taken to the field and along with collection of plants for the voucher specimens, the use of the plants as given by the tribal informants was noted. Discussions were made at times with local chiefs,

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priests and herbal doctors not only for gathering information, but also for confirming the uses of some plants recorded from different informants at different places. Each medicinal practice was cross checked with at least 3-4 informants, critically analyzed and documented. In the enumeration, plant species used for curing various women diseases and reproductive ailments are arranged alphabetically. Family name, vernacular name and voucher specimen number follows it. Finally ethnomedical data is presented in detail, followed by mode of preparation, administration and dosage of drugs. Plant specimens were deposited in the Herbarium of Botany Department of Andhra University, Visakhapatnam. The newly reported plants and uses have been marked with an asterisk. Prior consent of the knowledge providers was obtained.

Enumerations

Abras precatorius L., (Fabaceae), Gurivinda
Abortion: Two spoonfuls of root decoction of red variety is administered orally daily once before breakfast for 3 days.

*Contraceptives: A seed of white variety covered with jaggery is swallowed during menstrual period to prevent conception for one year.

Abutilon indicum (L.) Sweet, (Malvaceae), Tutturabenda
*Menstrual disorders: 2 spoonfuls of root decoction is administered daily twice for 3 days.

Achyranthes aspera L., (Amaranthaceae), Uttareni
*Post partum treatment: Root paste is applied over the navel and pubic region.

Aerva lanata (L.) Juss., (Amaranthaceae), Astmabaya
*Abortion: 7-8 cm long root piece when inserted into uterus through vagina for whole night causes abortion of pregnancy upto 3 months.

Alangium salvifolium (L.f.) Wang., (Alangiaceae), Vudugu
*Labour pains: A part of bark removed from eastern side of the stem is kept in the hair of the head. It is removed soon after delivery.

Aristolochia bracteolata Lam., (Aristolochiaceae), Gadidagarapa
*Menorrhagia: Roots mixed with 5 seeds of Piper nigrum is ground. 2 spoonfuls of paste is administered daily before breakfast for 3 days.

Anamirta cocculus (L.) Wight & Arn., (Menispermaceae), Koditeega
Contraction of uterus: Tender leaf paste is applied on the vagina immediately after delivery for 1 hour.

Ananas comosus L., (Bromeliaceae), Anasa
Abortion: Three spoonfuls of leaf paste is administered early in the morning for 3 days.

Annona reticulata L., (Annonaceae), Ramaphalam
*Abortion: Seeds with those of Piper nigrum are taken in equal quantities and powdered. 3 gm of powder is administered daily once for 3 days before breakfast for abortion of pregnancy upto 3 months.

Argemone mexicana L., (Papaveraceae), Balarakkisa
*Menorrhagia: Roots with seeds of Piper nigrum and jaggery are taken in equal quantities and ground. Two spoonfuls of paste is administered daily before breakfast for 3 days.

Asparagus racemosus Willd., (Liliaceae), Pilliteegalu
*Fertility: Tuberous root with roots of Bombax ceiba and seeds of Piper nigrum are taken in equal quantities and ground. 2 spoonfuls of paste mixed in goat milk is administered daily before breakfast from the 3rd day of menses for 5 days.

Atylosia scarabaeoides (L.) Benth., (Fabaceae), Adavivulava teega
*Menorrhagia: Roots mixed with 5 seeds of Piper nigrum is ground. 2 spoonfuls of paste is administered daily before breakfast for 3 days.

Butea monosperma (Lam.) Taub., (Fabaceae), Moduga
*Menorrhagia: Stem bark and bulbs of Allium sativum are taken in equal quantities and ground. A spoonful of paste mixed with a pinch of cheese is administered from the third day of menses daily twice for 3 days.

Calotropis procera (Ait.) R. Br., (Asclepiadaceae), Nalla jilledu
Abortion: Leaf is slightly fried in castor oil and placed on vagina for whole night in early stages of pregnancy.

Carica papaya L., (Caricaceae), Boppayi
Abortion: Tender fruit paste with fresh latex is administered daily twice for 5 days. It causes abortion upto 5 months.
Cassia auriculata L., (Caesalpiniaceae), Tangedu
*Leucorrhoea: Roots and stem bark of Azadirachta indica are taken in equal quantities and ground. 2 spoonfuls of paste mixed in a glass of milk is administered daily once for 5 days.
Cassitya filiformis L., (Lauraceae), Paachiteega
*Leucorrhoea: Two spoonfuls of stem juice mixed with a pinch of asafoetida is administered before breakfast for 5 days.
Curculigo orchioides Gaertn., (Hypoxidaceae), Nela tadi
*Labour pain: Corm is kept in the hair knot of head.
Dalbergia latifolia Roxb., (Fabaceae), Iruguduchema
*Menorrhagia: Two spoonfuls of root paste is administered with a glass of water daily once for 7 days.
Dodonaea viscosa (L.) Jacq., (Sapindaceae), Bandari
*Contraceptive: Handful of leaves mixed with jaggery is ground. 2 spoonfuls of paste is administered daily once before breakfast for 5 days.
Ferula asafoetida L., (Apiaceae), Inguva
*Post partum problems: Two spoonfuls of asafoetida mixed with jaggery is administered daily once for 3 days.
Gloriosa superba L., (Liliaceae), Agni sikha
Abortion: Tuberous root and seeds of Piper nigrum are ground. 2 spoonfuls of paste mixed with a pinch of ghee is administered early in the morning to abort pregnancy upto 3 months.
Gmelina arborea Roxb., (Verbenaceae), Tella gummudu
*Menorrhagia: Stem bark and the stem of Pterocarpus marsupium are taken in equal quantities and ground. The paste is made into pills of peanut seed size with sugar and administered 2 pills daily twice for 2 days.
Hybanthus enneaspermus (L.) F. Muell., (Violaceae), Ratnapurusha
*Fertility: Leaf paste mixed in a glass of milk is administered daily once from the 5th day of menses before going to bed daily once for 7 days.
Kalanchoe pinnata (Lam.) Pers., (Crassulaceae), Ranapaala
*Menorrhagia: Leaves along with those of Aloe vera and Catharanthus roseus and bulbs of Allium sativum are taken in equal quantities and ground. 2 spoonfuls of paste mixed with cheese is administered daily twice for 7 days.
Limonia crenulata Roxb., (Rutaceae), Torra velaga
*Post partum problems: Stem bark is ground and soaked in water for half a day. A glass of the above decoction is administered daily twice for 5 days.
Mimosa pudica L., (Mimosaceae), Attipatti
*Menorrhagia: Three spoonfuls of leaf juice is administered for every 3 hrs for about 3 days.
Pedalium murex L., (Pedaliaceae), Enugu palluru
*Fertility: Two spoonfuls of fruit powder mixed with the leaf juice of Cleome viscosa is administered from the 5th day of menses daily once for 5 days.
Pterocarpus marsupium Roxb., (Fabaceae), Yegisa
*Contraceptive: Stem bark with that of Mitragyna parviflora are taken in equal quantities and ground. The paste is made into pills of peanut seed size. 4 pills mixed with honey are administered from the 5th day of menses daily once for 5 days.
Pterospermum xyllocarpum (Gaertn.) Sant. & Wagh, (Sterculiaceae), Lolugu
*Leucorrhoea: A spoonful of leaf paste mixed with honey is administered daily twice for 5 days.
Rauwolfia serpentina (L.) Benth. ex Kurz, (Apocynaceae), Pathala garidi
*Gonorrhoea: Root, tuberous roots of Boerhavia chinensis, stem bark of Alstonia scholaris are taken in equal quantities and ground. 2 spoonfuls of paste is administered daily twice for 21 days.
*Labour pain: Roots and leaves of Aloe vera are taken in equal quantities and ground. A spoonful of paste with hot water is administered during labour pain.
Semecarpus anacardium L. f., (Anacardiaceae), Nallajeedi
*Menstrual disorders: Fruits, bulbs of Allium sativum and seeds of Piper nigrum are taken in equal quantities and ground. A spoonful of paste is administered with jaggery before breakfast for 3 days.
Sida cordifolia L., (Malvaceae), Nunnapaku
Leucorrhoea: A spoonful of dried leaf powder mixed with milk is administered daily twice for 5 days.
Sorghum vulgare L., (Poaceae), Jonnalu
*Gonorrhoea: Root juice mixed with Piper nigrum seed powder is administered daily twice for 7 days.
Soymida febrifuga (Roxb.) A. Juss., (Meliaceae), Somi chettu
*Post partum care: Decoction of stem bark is administered after delivery.
Sterculia urens Roxb., (Sterculiaceae), Kovella chettu

*Labour pain: A spoonful of stem bark powder mixed in a glass of hot water is administered once only.

Urginea indica (Roxb.) Kunth, (Liliaceae), Adavi elli

Abortion: Three spoonfuls of bulb paste kept in cotton is inserted into vagina to cause abortion upto 3 months of pregnancy.

Results and discussion

The present paper deals with 37 plant species belonging to 28 families used in various women disorders and reproductive ailments like leucorrhoea, menorrhagia, gonorrhoea, menstrual disorders, contraction of uterus, fertility & abortion, labour pain, post partum problems and as contraceptives. In the present study, two plant species Anamirta cocculus and Ferula asafoetida, and 33 uses have been newly reported.

The aboriginals and rural folk freely make use of modern medicines for cure of ailments other than gynaecological complaints. But for gynaecological complaints, they are generally bashful and hesitate to go in for medicaments from hospitals or health centres. Instead, they prefer to consult private, local medicinemen or witchdoctors of their own community so as to keep secrecy, as far as possible about diseases of their own or their family members. As the results are highly satisfactory to the local population, they have great faith in it. Thus, the acceptability of these preparations is quite high in population. However, a chemical and pharmacological screening of these recipes is essential to isolate the active principles and to detect the mechanism involved thereof.

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