A survey of plant crude drugs in folklore from Ranga Reddy district, Andhra Pradesh, India

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Folklore medicinal practices of plant crude drugs for various ailments recorded from Mirzaguda village, Ranga Reddy district, Andhra Pradesh are presented. The particulars of plant parts used, mode of preparation and administration are given. About 50 crude drugs, either single, bi- or as multi-component preparations are used for various ailments. This information provides immense potential for study of relationship of the active principles of the drugs with the ailments concerned. In all 59 plant species belonging to 37 families used in primary health care are detailed.

Keywords: Folklore medicinal practices, Plant crude drugs, Mirzaguda village, Ranga Reddy district, Andhra Pradesh.

The village Mirzaguda is located at 78° 16' E longitude, 17° 24' 30" N latitude about 21 km West of Hyderabad. The extension of investigated area is 26.09 sq km in Shankerpally Mandal, Ranga Reddy district of Andhra Pradesh, India. The population of the village is 2635, comprising various indigenous communities and castes. The inhabitants are largely agriculturists engaged in subsistence farming, and labourers. The whole area constitutes plains with agricultural tracts interrupted by boulders, open scrub and streams of undefined canals. The red fine grain sandy soil of the region is suitable for luxuriant growth of medicinal plants. The people of this region depend on folklore crude drugs practices for primary healthcare. The flora of this region is inadequately explored ethnobotanically. However, there is information pertaining to ethnomedicinal practices on diseases of cattle and bone fractures from this region. In view of this, the present study of the use of crude drugs for human ailments in this area was undertaken.

Methods of Survey

Field trips were conducted to Mirzaguda village, Ranga Reddy district, Andhra Pradesh during 1998-1999, covering all seasons. The ethnomedicinal data were recorded following the standard procedures by interacting with as many as...
8-10 herbal practitioners and elders of the village with the knowledge of herbal medicine. The information gathered was cross-checked. Plant specimens were collected during the survey in different seasons and herbarium specimens were prepared and identified with the help of local floras\(^1\).\(^6\)\(^7\). The voucher specimens were deposited in the Herbarium, Department of Botany, P.G. College of Science, Osmania University, Saifabad, Hyderabad 500 004, India.

**Observations**

The plant drugs are arranged alphabetically in the order of their botanical names; first name is considered in case of multi-component preparations. Each entry has botanical name, family, vernacular/local names, part used, preparation of drug, dosage and mode of administration, and ailments concerned.

*Abutilone indicum* (Linn.) Sweet (Malvaceae) *Tutturbanda; Ventilago calyculata* Tul. (Rhamnaceae) *Surugudu; Alangium salviolium* (Linn.) Wang. (Alangiaceae) *Undugu; Dichrostachys cinerea* (Linn.) Wight. & Arn. (Mimosaceae) *Velthuru*—The stem barks of these plants in equal proportions are powdered along with home remedial ingredients (+) and given 3-5 g per day dose to women after delivery 5-6 times to prevent infectious diseases.

*Achyranthes aspera* Linn. (Amarantheae) *Utareni; Streblus asper* Lour. (Moraceae) *Barrenka*—The roots of A. aspera and stems of S. asper in equal proportions are powdered and used as tooth powder for strengthening gums and teeth.

*Aegle marmelos* (Linn.) Correa ex Roxb. (Rutaceae) *Maaredu*—After taking 9 rounds around the tree the leaves are plucked and dropped into hot water with which bath is taken to get relief from body pains.

*Althaea excelsa* Roxb. (Simarubaceae) *Peddamamu*—The leaves are heated and the poultice is applied in muscle sprains.

*Albizia amara* Boiv. (Mimosaceae) *Narangi*—Leaf paste in goat’s milk is applied externally over fractures 4-5 times for fast healing.

*Albizia lebbeck* Benth. (Mimosaceae) *Telladirisena*—One or two spoonful of aqueous extract of the bark is given 3-4 times to adults for relief in stomach pain.

*Aloe barbadensis* Mill. (Agavaceae) *Kalabanda*—Fleshy portion of the leaf mixed with sugar is given orally as coolant and for vitality to adults and pregnant women.

*Andrographis paniculata* (Burm. f.) Wall. ex Nees (Acanthaceae) *Neelavenu*—The leaf aqueous extract is given orally a teaspoonful twice a day for three days as an effective cure for fevers and stomachache in adults and children.

*Argemone mexicana* Linn. (Papaveraceae) *Jeripothuchettu*—Latex from the plant is applied to red burning eyes and also for cataract. Leaf paste is applied in scorpion sting for quick relief.

*Aristolochia indica* Linn. (Aristolochiaceae) *Nagasaram*—The root tuber is ground with little water and the paste is applied to eyes for relief from poisoning in snakebite.
Atylosia sp. (Fabaceae) Sannachappidi-aku.—Leaf aqueous extract is given orally, a teaspoonful 2-3 times in constipation in adults.

Balanites aegyptiaca (Linn.) Delile (Balanitaceae) Gar.-The ground paste of the stem bark is used to poison fish.

Bauhinia racemosa Lam. (Caesalpiniaceae) Aarechettu.—The aqueous extract of fresh bark of stem mixed with pepper is given 2-3 times to women to prevent white and red discharges.

Calotropis gigantea (Linn.) Ait. f. (Asclepiadaceae) Telaljilledu.—White flowers eaten in betel leaf to get relief in chronic cough. The roots are crushed and the aqueous extract is applied externally and also taken orally for snakebite.

Calotropis procera (Ait.) Ait. f. (Asclepiadaceae) Errajilledu.—The latex is applied to navel and limewater sprinkled over it for relief in abdominal sprains.

Carissa spinarum Linn. (Apocynaceae) Kalimi; Dodonaea viscosa (Linn.) Jacq. (Sapindaceae) Pulivavili.—The roots of two plants in equal proportions are ground by adding little water along with home made ingredients (+) and given orally to men as aphrodisiac.

Cassia auriculata Linn. (Caesalpiniaceae) Tangedu.—Tender leaves are ground thoroughly with sulphur and mercury and applied to skin in eczema and scabies. The aqueous extract of tender leaves given orally is an effective remedy for women in lumbar pains, stomach pain and white discharge and for vitality.

Catunaregam spinosa (Thunb.) Tirvengadum syn. Randia dumetorum (Retz.) Poir. in Lam. (Rubiaceae) Manga.—The juice of crushed flowers, 2-3 spoonful, is given once a day for 3-4 days to women as an effective remedy in white discharges.

Celosia argentea Linn. (Amarantaceae) Gunugu.—The paste of the leaves is applied in skin affections and insect bite for relief.

Chloroxylon swietenia DC. (Rutaceae) Billiudu.—The stem bark is powdered and mixed in coconut oil and applied to hair for removal of dandruff.

Cissus pallida (Wight & Arn.) Planch. (Vitaceae) Konda gammad.—The aqueous extract of root tubers taken in a glass of toddy (sap) obtained from Phoenix sylvestris Roxb. early in the morning on empty stomach and at noon for 2-3 days for control of sexual diseases.

Cleome viscosa Linn. (Cleomaceae) Talari.—Root aqueous extract (3-4 drops into ear) is used for severe ear pain as an effective remedy.

Clerodendrum phlomidis Linn. f. (Verbenaceae) Takkali.—Leaf is crushed under teeth for effective and quick remedy for tooth pain. Crushed leaf paste is applied externally in painful swellings.

Coccinia indica Wight & Arn. (Cucurbitaceae) Kakidonda.—The extracted juice of the leaves is applied over regions of muscle sprains and painful swellings for relief.

Cocculus hirsutus (Linn.) Diels. (Menispermaceae) Dusariteega.—Leaves are crushed and eaten for vitality and improvement of virility.

Cuminum cyminum Linn. (Apiaceae) Jeelakarra.—The stem bark and seeds are
ground and its decoction is given to women in white discharge, in burning micturition, and to men in turbid urination.

_Datura metel_ Linn. syn. _Datura fastuosa_ Linn. (Solanaceae) _Nalla unetha_.—Leaf aqueous extract is applied externally for painful swellings.

_Delonix regia_ Rafin. (Caesalpiniaceae) _Chitikesaram_.—The leaves are heated and applied to head for relief in migraine.

_Dichrostachys cinerea_ (Linn.) Wight & Arn. (Mimosaceae) _Velthuru_; _Abutilon indicum_ (Malvaceae) _Tuttur Benda_.—The aqueous extract of the fresh barks of these two plants is given orally once daily for a week in paralysis with benefit.

_Dodonaea viscosa_ Linn. (Sapindaceae) _Pulivavili_.—The leaves are warmed and tied to head for relief in severe headache.

_Echinops echinatus_ Roxb. (Asteraceae) _Brahmadandi_.—The decoction of roots is given 4-5 times in chronic cough and asthma as an effective cure.

_Ficus benghalensis_ Linn. (Moraceae) _Marrichettu_.—a) Adventitious roots are directly eaten. b) Sugar candies or seeds of _Prunus amygdalus_ Batsch are soaked in milky latex of the tree and taken 5-6 times early in the morning for sexual vigour. c) Shoot buds are shade-dried and powdered, taken a spoonful a day along with honey for a week to generate strength and sexual vigour.

_Ficus religiosa_ Linn. (Moraceae) _Ravichettu_.—The latex of the plant is applied over boils and abscesses 2-3 times with a paper plastered over it with a hole for quick dissolving and relief.

_Gloriosa superba_ Linn. (Liliaceae) _Janajananigola_.—The paste of ground root tubers is applied over boils and abscesses for quick and effective relief.

_Grewia hirsuta_ Vahl (Tiliaceae) _Jigilika_.—Bark aqueous extract is given 2-3 times for effective cure in dysentery.

_Gymnema sylvestre_ R. Br. (Asclepiadaceae) _Podapatri_.—The juice of fresh leaves is applied to eyes for clear vision and for cataract. Dry leaves are burnt and smoked for good general health.

_Hemidesmus indicus_ R. Br. (Asclepiadaceae) _Sugandhapala_.—The leaf juice, 2-3 drops, mixed in mothers milk is applied to eyes in redness and burning, with good effect.

_Holopilea integrifolia_ Planch. (Ulmaceae) _Nemilinara_.—The young leaves are ground and the paste is applied 4-5 times to fingers in whitlow for quick relief. The stem bark is crushed and applied over joints as an affective remedy in rheumatic pains.

_Mimosa pudica_ Linn. (Mimosaceae) _Attapatia_, roots; _Grewia hirsuta_ Vahl (Tiliaceae) _Jigilika_, stembark; _Ocimum sanctum_ Linn. (Labiatae) _Tulasi_, roots; _Ziziphus mauritiana_ Lam. (Rhamnaceae) _Renichettu_, stembark; _Cordia dichotoma_ Forst. (Boraginaceae) _Irikichettu_, stembark—The above plant parts in equal proportions along with few pepper seeds ground with water, extracted, filtered and given 2-3 spoonful orally for 3 days in severe dysentery as an effective remedy.

_Opuntia dillenii_ Haw. (Cactaceae) _Palakajemudu_.—The phyllodes are heated and bandaged over the body part for effective and quick removal of thorns.
**Pavonia odorata** Willd. (Malvaceae)
*Chatti benda*.—The leaves mixed with jaggery are ground and given orally for effective removal of thorns from the body.

**Pergularia daemia** (Forsk.) Chiov. (Asclepiadaceae) *Guttintitti*.—The leaf aqueous extract is given orally 2-3 times to children to treat dyspepsia and indigestion. Flowers are powdered with black pepper and given with mothers' milk for cough and asthmatic attacks in children and adults.

**Plumbago zeylanica** Linn. (Plumbaginaceae) *Chitrannulam*.—The root paste is applied over snakebite and scorpion sting for relief.

**Solanum nigrum** Linn. (Solanaceae)
*Buddagochi*.—The roots along with home remedial ingredients (+) are powdered and given orally for bodily swelling due to liver disorders with good effect.

**Solanum surattense** Burm.f. (Solanaceae) *Ramanudaka*.—The dried fruits are burnt and infected teeth are exposed to smoke for quick relief.

**Soymida febrifuga** A. Juss. (Meliaceae) *Sonichettu*.—The aqueous extract of the fresh bark in toddy (sap) of *Phoenix sylvestris* Roxb. is taken in fevers and for vitality.

**Thespesia lampas** (Cav.) Dalz. & Gibbs. (Malvaceae) *Adavibenda*.—The dried roots, powdered and mixed with little sugar, are taken orally for a week for controlling diabetes.

**Tinospora cordifolia** (Willd.) Miers ex Hook. f. & Thoms. (Menispermaceae) *Tippateega*.—The leaves are eaten to control diabetes. Decoction of stem is useful in fevers.

**Tylophora indica** (Burm.f.) Merrill (Asclepiadaceae) *Mekameyani-aku*.—Leaves are eaten, one on first day and increasing by one each day for seven days in the morning on empty stomach. It provides immunity to many diseases.

**Vitex negundo** Linn. (Verbenaceae) *Vavili; Tylophora indica* (Burm.f.) Merrill (Asclepiadaceae) *Mekameyani-aku; Diospyros chloroxylon* Roxb. (Ebanaceae) *Illintha; Cassia fistula* Linn. (Caesalpiniaaceae) *Rela; Enicostema axillare* Raynal. (Gentianaceae) *Resika; Maytenus emarginata* (Willd.) Ding. Hou. (Celastraceae) *Danti*.—The dried young leaves of above plants along with home made ingredients (+) and sugar are mixed and powdered. Small round globules of 1-2 gm are made and taken one each day for 9 days as an effective remedy in diabetes, piles, body pains and arthritis. Food: only rotis made of jowar (seeds of *Sorghum vulgare* Pers.) with red chilly powder are eaten during the treatment.

**Wrightia tinctoria** R.Br. (Apocynaceae) *Palakodise*.—Seeds are soaked in goat milk, ground and given for 3-4 days for vitality and vigour. Dried leaves are powdered and used as tooth powder for strength and prevention of diseases of gums.

(+) Home made ingredients = equal proportions of seeds of *Trachyspermum ammi* (Linn.) Sprague syn. *Carum copticum* Hiern; *Piper nigrum* Linn.; dried rhizome of *Zingiber officinale* Rosc. and bulbs of *Allium sativum* Linn.
Discussion
The present paper details information on 59 plant species belonging to 37 different families used as herbal remedies in primary health care by the village folk of Mirzaguda, Ranga Reddy district, Andhra Pradesh, India. The data indicate that there is still valid and active knowledge of the therapeutic uses of wild plant species growing in the region. The plants used are found growing spontaneously and available in the vicinity and in many cases are the immediately available therapeutic resources. Most of the herbal remedies comprise one or, few with two and rarely three or more in a preparation thus providing ample opportunities to study their active principles in relation to the ailments concerned. The herbal remedies mentioned are against post-delivery infections, lumbago, white and red discharges in women, body pains and swellings, tooth and gum affections, muscle catch and sprains, bone fractures, fevers, stomach ache, eye infections and cataract, snake bite and scorpion sting, cough and asthma, ear aches, head ache and migraine, boils and abscesses, dysentery, rheumatic pains, liver disorders, diabetes, piles, as aphrodisiac, for improvement of general strength and sexual vigour, etc.

Herbal remedies provide essential health care, which the village people of this region utilise to immense benefit. Although these remedies do not find esteem compared to modern medicine, their efficacy is claimed to be high. An in-depth study, mainly experimental with clinical efficacy of these drug preparations is essential in many cases.

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