

Through this column we intend to record the work of innovators in our society who are making and using their own products and technology at home or in small-scale industries. Also we would include some articles and information from ethnobotanical reports. It is hoped that this would lead to further research and acknowledge innovator's innovations.

We invite authors/readers to contribute details of their innovations and share their knowledge for common good.

Herbal remedies of Madugga tribes of Siruvani forest, South India

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Abstract

Information on 102 plant species and tribal (*Maduggas*) prescriptions for therapeutic uses of each species and plant parts employed is presented in this paper. As the traditional herbal remedies are based on ancestral knowledge and empiric experiences, these types of ethnomedical survey appeared to be useful for the research on medicinal plants.

Keywords : Herbal remedies, Medicinal plants, Madugga tribes, Siruvani forest, Tamil Nadu, South India.

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Maduggas, *Ponthatas* and *Yathrias*. The different ethnic groups settled through out this place, have their own way of life style, even in using the plant resources.

The study area selected is in Coimbatore district with approximate area of 105 sq. kms. The land here slopes from West to East and as a result most of the rivers like, Perur, Noyal, Pathi, Yanii, Cholai, Pambaru and others flow through this forest. Rainfall commences during the month of June and comes to an end during August-September. The annual average rainfall is 60-100 cm usually the cold weather begins in the month of December and lasts till the onset of rains. The average annual minimum temperature is 16°C and the maximum is 24-25°C.

The elevation ranges from 300 to 2200 m above sea level. The specific tribal settlement visited include

Introduction

The man had long struggle to achieve mastery over powerful forces of nature, he has always turned to plants for help, especially when he struck with ailments. Undoubtedly, the plant kingdom still holds many species of plants which contain undiscovered valuable medicinally active phytoconstituents. Screening of medicinal plants provides potential sources of biodynamic substances of therapeutic value in natural product

research (Hartwell 1970; Agarwal, 1986; Hussain & Siddiqui, 1987; Satyavati *et al*, 1987). Hence, large numbers of plants are constantly being screened for their possible pharmacological activities. The present study was undertaken based on this rationale.

The Siruvani forest forms the South West part of Tamil Nadu, India, included in the Coimbatore district and floristically it is one of the richest part of the state. It is inhabited by various ethnic groups such as

Seenagapathy, Vellapathy, Poddapathy, Sadivayal, Kalkothi, Jaagir poorathi, Attungal, Paripatti and Perumal kovil.

The *Maduggas* are one of the primitive hill tribals of Tamil Nadu. They are mainly located in the Siruvani village panchayat. There are totally 40 families and the total population is about 350. The information on the folk medicinal plants were gathered through interviews with local vaidyars (medicine men of *Maduggas*) and recorded with the help of interpreters. *Maduggas* speak their tribal language which is mixed with Tamil and Malayalam. These tribal healers maintain their status of medicine men by passing informations from father to son. They worship the goddess *Kaliyamman*.

Materials and Methods

The study area was surveyed five times during March 1998 to January 1999 in different weather condition and along different transects. Interviews were conducted in the villages with the co-operation of the corresponding village chiefs and forest people with their prior informed consents and the data were gathered from native informants who were healers, faith healers, priest and ordinary villagers who had knowledge of the curative property of plants. The mode of preparation of drugs and methods of their administration along with doses were recorded. The quantity of herbs and additives used were measured accurately by the investigators by estimating the amount carefully at the site. Each prescription was considered authentic only after confirmation through three or

more informants of districts localities and by cross checking in different times. The plants were identified and authenticated by Dr. Hyath, Professor, Forest College, The Tamilnadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore. Voucher herbarium specimens were prepared and deposited in the Department of Pharmacognosy, College of Pharmacy, SRIPMS, Coimbatore.

The families and the species within a family are arranged in alphabetical order. Species names are followed by collection number of each plant; English (E), local (Mudugga) names (LN), and the local medicinal uses with doses indicated.



Solanum surattense



Boerhaavia diffusa



Gymnema sylvestre



Wedelia calendulacea



Abutilon indicum

Enumeration

Acanthaceae

***Adhatoda zeylanica* Medic.** syn. *A. vasica* Nees (COP / PGSY / 207)

E : Vasaka; LN : *Adathoda*

A decoction of the dried root powder is used to treat respiratory disorders.

***Barleria strigosa* Willd.** (COP/PGSY/219)

LN : *Nilkurnni, Nili*

The decoction of root (one teaspoon, 3-4 times a day) is used in cough.

***Blepharis linariaefolia* Pers.** (COP / PGSY / 221)

LN : *Naethira poondu*

The decoction of root is used as sexual stimulant. Leaf juice is used as an expectorant.

Amaranthaceae

***Achyranthes aspera* Linn.** (COP/PGSY/205)

E : Prickly Chaff Flower; LN : *Nayuruvi*

The plant is powdered and mixed with groundnut oil and given orally to treat constipation and the paste of the leaves is used for skin rashes.

***Celosia cristata* Linn.** (COP / PGSY / 226)

E : Cock's Comb; LN : *Mayurshikha*

The flowers and seeds are crushed with water and used (2-3 teaspoon thrice daily) in cough and diarrhoea.

Apiaceae

***Centella asiatica* Linn.** (COP / PGSY / 228)

E : Indian Penny Wort; LN : *Vallarai*

The leaf juice is used for increasing memory and externally

used for wounds and burns.

Apocynaceae

***Alstonia scholaris* R. Br.** (COP / PGSY / 209)

E: Devil Tree; LN : *Elilppalai*

One teaspoon of leaf decoction is used daily to increase lactation in females.

***A. venenata* R. Br.** (COP / PGSY / 211)

LN : *Pazha munnipala*

About 10ml fruit juice taken daily after meals is used to treat epilepsy.

***Wrightia tinctoria* R. Br.** (COP / PGSY / 296)

E : Pala Indigo Plant; LN : *Kodagapulai, Vepalai*

The bark and seeds are powdered and mixed with coconut oil and applied on the wounds. 10-20ml of decoction is given daily with one glass of milk.

Araceae

***Amorphophallus sylvaticus* (Roxb.) Kunth** syn. *Synantherias sylvatica* Schott. (COP / PGSY / 285)

LN : *Kattakarunai*

The seed powder is mixed with water to form a paste and used in tooth ache.

Aristolochiaceae

***Aristolochia indica* Linn.** (COP / PGSY / 213)

LN : *Ishwara mooliga*

Decoction of roots, rhizomes and leaves (one teaspoon, 3-4 times a day) is used in cough, inflammation and also as a bitter tonic.

Asclepiadaceae

***Calotropis gigantea* (Linn.) R. Br. ex Ait.** (COP / PGSY / 227)

LN : *Erikku*

The root decoction is concentrated into a paste form and used for elephantiasis. The root decoction (10-15ml in divided doses, 2-3 times daily) is used in coughs, colds and in stomach problems.

***Gymnema sylvestre* R. Br.** (COP / PGSY / 243)

E : Periplora of the woods; LN : *Adigam*

The leaf juice is taken internally to decrease excess urine secretion. It is found to be useful to cure wounds and boils.

***Tylophora indica* (Burm.f.) Merrill** syn. *T. asthmatica* Wight & Arn. (COP / PGSY / 292)

E : Indian Ipecacuanha; LN : *Kagitham, Vallipala*

The leaves are bruised and about 5ml decoction is used 4-6 times daily in bronchitis.

Asteraceae

***Artemisia vulgaris* Linn.** (COP / PGSY / 214)

E : Fleabane; LN : *Masipathiri*

The flower buds and leaf juices (5ml; 2-3 times daily) can be used as an anthelmintic and expectorant.

***Chrysanthemum coronarium* Linn.** (COP / PGSY / 230)

LN : *Shamanthippu*

The bark and flower decoction (one teaspoon, 2-3 times daily) is used as stomachic.

***Helianthus debilis* Nutt.** (COP / PGSY / 247)

LN : *Suriyagandhi*

The leaf and flower are powdered and mixed with water and the concentrated form is used to treat skin rashes and sore skin.

Notonia grandiflora DC. (COP / PGSY / 265)

LN : *Measkathuthali*

The decoction of the stem and bark (20-25ml, twice daily for two weeks) is used as a preventive for hydrophobia and as a diuretic.

Vernonia cinerea Linn. (COP / PGSY / 294)

E : Purple Fleabane; LN : *Munjalarisalai*

The decoction (10-15ml, twice daily) of the entire plant is used as antispasmodic, stomachic.

Wedelia calendulacea Linn. (COP / PGSY / 295)

LN : *Munjalarisalai*

Leaf and flower juices mixed and one teaspoon of it is given (2-3 times) daily in coughs and skin diseases.

Xanthium strumarium Linn. (COP / PGSY / 302)

E : Cocklebur; LN : *Marlumutta*

The decoction of the root is used as tonic and sedative.

Caesalpinaceae

Caesalpinia bonducella Flem. (COP / PGSY / 225)

E : Bonduc Nut; LN : *Kazarchikkai*

The fruit is used in fever.

Cassia fistula Linn. (COP / PGSY / 224)

E : Purging Fistula; LN : *Sarakonnai*

The flowers are powdered and then mixed with honey. One tablespoonful, once a day is taken as a laxative.

C. tora Linn. (COP / PGSY / 223)

LN : *Thagari verai*

The leaves and stem are crushed and applied locally to treat skin rashes.

Campanulaceae

Lobelia nicotianaefolia Heyne (COP / PGSY / 259)

E : Wild Tobacco; LN : *Kattu pukayillai*

The leaf and flower decoctions are used for respiratory disorders.

Combretaceae

Terminalia arjuna Wight & Arn. (COP / PGSY / 289)

LN : *Venmaruthu*

The decoction of the bark and leaves are used in ear ache, jaundice and as diuretic.

T. bellirica Roxb. (COP / PGSY / 288)

E : Belliric Myrobalan; LN : *Tanrick-kay*

One teaspoon fruit juice is used 3-5 times in a day in cough. It is also used in eye infection.

T. tomentosa Wight & Arn. (COP / PGSY / 287)

LN : *Karuchanam, Karuppumarudu*

The bark is allowed to macerate with water and the decoction (5ml, 2-3 times daily) is taken internally to cure dysentery and abdominal pains.

Cucurbitaceae

Bryonopsis laciniosa (Linn.) Naud. syn. *Bryonia laciniosa* Linn. (COP / PGSY / 222)

LN : *Iviralli*

Leaf and fruit juices (5-10 ml) are given thrice daily in fever with flatulence.

Trichosanthes dioica Roxb. (COP / PGSY / 291)

E : Wild Snake Guard; LN : *Kombupudalani*

The leaf or fruit is dried and powdered, then taken internally for stomach pains and as an anthelmintic.

Droseraceae

Drosera lunata Buch.-Ham. syn. *D. peltata* Sm. (COP / PGSY / 236)

LN : *Alukannai*

The paste of whole plant with water is used externally to remove old age wrinkles and in rheumatism.

Euphorbiaceae

Acalypha fruticosa Forsk. (COP / PGSY / 206)

E : Birch-leaved Acalypha; LN : *Kuppaimani*

One teaspoon of the decoction of leaves and roots is given 2-4 times a day to treat fever and loss of appetite.

Bridelia retusa Spreng. (COP / PGSY / 217)

LN : *Adamarudu*

The bark powder paste is used externally to treat skin rashes.

Croton tiglium Linn. (COP / PGSY / 231)

E : Purging Croton; LN : *Naevanan kai, Nervalam*

About 50g of the seed powder is mixed with 100ml of water and make a decoction. Around 5ml of this is taken early in the morning for three days for treating constipation and worm infection.

Emblica officinalis Gaertn. (COP / PGSY / 238)

E : Emblic myrobalan; LN : *Nelli*

The fruit is treated with butter milk and around 5ml of this is fed daily 1-4 times to children suffering from whooping cough.

Euphorbia helioscopia Linn. (COP / PGSY / 239)

E : Sun Spurge; LN : *Bethik keerai*

One teaspoon of leaf and root decoction is used 1-2 times a day as an anthelmintic.

E. hirta Linn. (COP / PGSY / 240)

LN : *Amman patcha arisi*

The fresh leaf juice (one teaspoon 3-5 times daily) is given in cough and asthma.

Jatropha curcas Linn. (COP / PGSY / 256)

E : Purging nut; LN : *Kattumanakku*

The leaf juice mixed with oil is used to treat local inflammation of nerves.

Phyllanthus urinaria Linn. (COP / PGSY / 270)

LN : *Shivappu keelar nelli*

The leaf decoction (20 ml twice a day) is used in jaundice. It is also used as a fish poison.

Fabaceae

Abrus precatorius Linn. (COP/PGSY/ 201)

E : Indian licorice; LN : *Kuntumani*

The bruised leaves and the decoction are used in cough (one teaspoon thrice a day). It is applied externally for curing dermatitis.

Dalbergia latifolia Roxb. (COP / PGSY / 237)

E : East Indian Rosewood; LN : *Itti, Todagati*

The decoction of stem bark (10ml in 2-3 divided doses for three day is given in diarrhoea and as a stomachic.

Dolichos lablab Linn. (COP / PGSY / 235)

E : Lablab bean; LN : *Pandhal avarai*

The whole plant is cooked and used as a curry to treat fatigue and disturbed mood.

Indigofera pulchella Roxb. (COP / PGSY / 253)

LN : *Manali, Naringi*

The decoction of root (5-10ml in 2-3 divided doses) is given daily for cough and body ache.

I. subulata Vahl ex Poir. (COP/PGSY/254)

LN : *Manali*

Decoction of the entire plant (one teaspoon thrice daily) is given in fever and inflammation.

I. tinctoria Linn. (COP / PGSY / 255)

E : Common Indigo; LN : *Nilam, Nilli*

The decoction of the leaves and roots is mixed with *Achyranthes aspera* leaf juice for dog bites.
Mucuna prurita Hook. (COP / PGSY / 264)

E : Common Cowitch; LN : *Poonaikali*

The seeds, roots and legume powder is mixed with water and one teaspoon taken twice daily for worm infection, sexual stimulation or as an astringent.

Pterocarpus marsupium Roxb. (COP / PGSY / 272)

E : Indian Kino; LN : *Vengai maram*

The red exudate obtained is added with sweets and used as aphrodisiac.

Smithia germiniflora Roth (COP / PGSY / 284)

LN : *Tholukkani*

The whole plant decoction is useful in rheumatism, stomach ulcers and as an ageing retardant.

Icacinaceae

Mappia foetida Miers. (COP / PGSY / 260)

LN : *Arti, Choria*

The leaf is powdered and added with cattle feed (around 5g of leaf powder to 1kg of cattle feed) to increase lactation in cattle and also used to treat open wounds in the skin.

Lamiaceae

Leucas aspera Spreng. (COP / PGSY / 258)

LN : *Thumba*

The flower juice 10ml daily early

in the morning is used to prevent frequent abortion.

Mentha arvensis Linn. (COP / PGSY / 262)

E : Corn Mint; LN : *Pudina*

The leaf juice is used to increase appetite and to prevent vomiting.

M. piperita Linn. (COP / PGSY / 263)

E : Peppermint; LN : *Pudina*

The ground leaves are used to treat open wounds and burns.

Ocimum sanctum Linn. (COP / PGSY / 266)

E : Sacred Basil; LN : *Thulasi*

The leaf decoction (one teaspoon 3-4 times a day) is used as an expectorant and also in the case of whooping cough.

Loganiaceae

Strychnos nux-vomica Linn. (COP / PGSY / 286)

E : Nux-vomica; LN : *ETTI*

The seeds are boiled with cowdung and 1/8th of the total extract is diluted ten times with ash and used (10-20 g daily) as a stimulant.

Malvaceae

Abelmoschus esculentus (Linn.) Moench. syn. *Hibiscus esculentus* Linn. (COP / PGSY / 249)

E : Lady's Finger; LN : *Kasturi vendai*

Fresh seeds are used as stimulant and antispasmodic.

Abutilon indicum Linn. (COP/PGSY/ 202)

E : Country Mallow; LN : *Thutti*

The bark powder is macerated with water, concentrated and applied on joint pains.

Hibiscus furcatus Willd. (COP / PGSY / 250)

LN : *Kattu mullangi*

The flower, stem and leaf are moistened with water and applied as a solution to cure migraine.

***Pavonia odorata* Willd.** (COP/PGSY/269)

LN : *Peramutti*

The decoction of root (5 to 10 ml, 2-3 times a day) is taken as a tonic for dysentery and also as a carminative.

***Sida acuta* Burm.f.** (COP/PGSY/278)

LN : *Vattathrippi*

The leaf and root decoction (one teaspoon, 3-4 times daily) is used as diuretic, antipyretic and stomachic.

***S. cordifolia* Linn.** (COP/PGSY/281)

LN : *Katturam, Nilatutti*

The decoction of the entire plant is used in fevers. Externally used for wound healing.

***S. humicis* Cav.** (COP/PGSY/279)

LN : *Palampari*

One teaspoon, leaf and flower juice is taken daily 2-3 times in diarrhoea.

***S. indica* Linn.** (COP/PGSY/280)

LN : *Chini*

The root and leaf decoction 10-15ml daily one time is used in joint pains and as a febrifuge.

***Urena lobata* Linn.** (COP/PGSY/293)

LN : *Ottatti, Udiram*

The leaf or flower is powdered and mixed with kerosene to treat fungal and bacterial attack and cracks in the foot.

Marantaceae

***Maranta arundinacea* Linn.** (COP / PGSY / 261)

E : Arrow Root; LN : *Kuamau*

Drug rhizome powder is mixed with cow milk and used in diarrhoea and as a nutrient.

Meliaceae

***Azadirachta indica* A. Juss.** (COP / PGSY / 215)

E : Neem; LN : *Vembu*

The crushed leaves are applied externally to cure sore skin. The oil extracted from the seeds is used as an anthelmintic.

Menispermaceae

***Tinospora malabarica* Miers. ex Hook. f.** (COP / PGSY / 300)

LN : *Potchindil*

The fresh leaf and stem juice is used as a tonic and for the body pain.

Mimosaceae

***Acacia concinna* DC.** (COP/PGSY/203)

LN : *Seekai*

The decoction of pods and leaves is used to clean the scalp and the leaf powder is applied externally to treat skin diseases.

***A. leucophloea* Willd.** (COP/PGSY/204)

E : White Babool; LN : *Velvelam*

The bark is boiled with water and concentrated, which is used for tooth infections.

Nyctaginaceae

***Boerhaavia diffusa* Linn.** (COP / PGSY / 220)

E : Hogweed; LN : *Thaluthama*

The crushed leaves are made into decoction and used as a diuretic and anti-rheumatic.

Orchidaceae

***Vanda spathulata* Spreng.** (COP / PGSY / 298)

LN : *Pomman ponmariva*

The flower juice is used in asthma.

Oxalidaceae

***Oxalis corniculata* Linn.** (COP / PGSY / 267)

E : Indian Sorrel; LN : *Puliyarila*

The leaf juice (10-15ml, twice daily) is used in fever and as an appetite stimulant.

Piperaceae

***Piper longum* Linn.** (COP/PGSY/268)

E : Indian Long Pepper; LN : *Argadi*

The root powder (5g) is given along with *tulsi* leaf powder 5g and sugar 5g to pregnant women to prevent whooping cough.

Plumbaginaceae

***Plumbago zeylanica* Linn.** (COP / PGSY / 273)

LN : *Venkodivaeli*

Decoction of the root (10-20 ml twice daily) is used to treat leprosy and piles.

Polygonaceae

***Polygonum glabrum* Willd.** (COP / PGSY / 271)

LN : *Katalarle*

The leaf extract (about 5ml) is mixed with common salt (1-2g); boiled and used in dysentery.

Rhamnaceae

***Ziziphus trinervia* Roxb.** (COP / PGSY / 303)

LN : *Karukava*

The leaf decoction 10-15ml twice daily is used as a tonic and blood purifier.

Rubiaceae

***Adina cordifolia* Roxb.** (COP / PGSY / 208)

LN : *Kadamabai*

The leaf decoction (10-15ml) is taken twice daily as an anthelmintic.

Hymenodictyon excelsum Wall.
(COP / PGSY / 251)

LN : *Viralli*

The leaf juice is used to prevent fungal infections.

Randia dumetorum Poir. (COP / PGSY / 274)

E : Common Emetic Nut; LN : *Kadudam*

The leaves are mixed with oil and applied externally on wounds and tumours.

Rubia cordifolia Linn. (COP / PGSY / 275)

E : Indian Madder; LN : *Manjithi*, *Shevuk kodi*

The decoction of roots, 10-20ml once daily, is used in dysentery and as a vermifuge.

Rutaceae

Aegle marmelos Corr. ex Koen. (COP / PGSY / 212)

E : Bael Tree; LN : *Villuvam*

The fruit juice (one teaspoon) is taken early in the morning, acts as a laxative cooling and stomachic. Decoction of root is used in fever.

Glycosmis cochinchinensis Pierre
(COP / PGSY / 242)

LN : *Anam*

The root decoction is taken orally to decrease anxiety. It is also used as a digestive and carminative.

Ruta graveolens Linn. (COP / PGSY / 276)

E : Garden Rue; LN : *Aruvadam*

The whole plant juice (5-10ml once daily) is used as an anthelmintic in epilepsy and as an antispasmodic.

Toddalia asiatica Lam. (COP / PGSY / 290)

E : Wild Orange Tree; LN : *Milagaranai*

The root and bark infusions, around 5ml, 2-3 times daily, are used as an antimalarial and antipyretic.

Salvadoraceae

Azima tetracantha Lam. (COP / PGSY / 216)

LN : *Ichankai*, *Sanganjedi*

The leaf juice one teaspoon twice daily is used for cough and rheumatism.

Santalaceae

Santalum album Linn. (COP / PGSY / 277)

E : Sandal Wood Tree; LN : *Chandanam*

The wood is powdered and used externally as an antiseptic.

Scrophulariaceae

Bacopa monnieri Linn. (COP / PGSY / 218)

LN : *Nirbrahmi*

Decoction of leaves about 5ml, 3-4 times daily is used as a diuretic.

Solanaceae

Datura metel Linn. (COP / PGSY / 234)

LN : *Ummatham*

The leaves are powdered and mixed with coconut oil and applied externally for sore skin.

Solanum surattense Burm.f. syn. *S. xanthocarpum* Schrad. & Wendl. (COP / PGSY / 282)

E : Yellow Berried Nightshade; LN :

Kandangkathri

The leaves are powdered and applied to open wound and also as an anthelmintic.

S. verbascifolium Linn. (COP / PGSY / 283)

E : Potato tree; LN : *Anaichundai*

The fruits when taken uncooked, found to destroy tooth infections.

Withania somnifera Dunal. (COP / PGSY / 297)

LN : *Amukkuram*

The root and leaf decoctions are used in ulcers, coughs, dropsy and also as aphrodisiac.

Sterculiaceae

Helicteres isora Linn. (COP / PGSY / 248)

E : East Indian Screw Tree; LN : *Valampiri*

The entire fruit is crushed and given to patients suffering from diarrhoea. It is also used as a baby bath powder.

Tiliaceae

Grewia microcos Linn. (COP / PGSY / 246)

LN : *Kadambu*

The decoction (1-2 teaspoon, 2 times daily) of the entire plant is used in indigestion, fever and dysentery.

G. villosa Willd. (COP / PGSY / 245)

LN : *Kullai*

The decoction (10-15ml, once daily) of root and bark is used to treat diarrhoea.

Urticaceae

Laportea crenulata Gaud. (COP / PGSY / 257)

E : Devil Nettle; LN : *Ottapilavu*

Around 4g of seed powder is taken with water to treat fever and body pain.

Verbenaceae

Clerodendrum inerme (Linn.) Gaertn. (COP / PGSY / 229)

LN : *Anjali*, *Pinari*

The flower and leaf is dried and powdered and mixed with coconut oil and applied externally to treat skin rashes and psoriasis.

Gmelina arborea Linn. (COP / PGSY / 244)

LN : *Kattanam*, *Kumiz*

The fruit and leaf juice 10ml once a day for three days is used as a laxative.

***Vitex negundo* Linn.** (COP / PGSY / 301)

E : Monk's pepper; LN : *Vennochi*

The decoction (10-20ml once at bed time) of the leaves and fruits is used for worm infection.

Violaceae

***Ionidium suffruticosum* Ging.** (COP / PGSY / 252)

LN : *Orilathamara*

Leaf juice is used for scorpion sting and as a tonic.

Zingiberaceae

***Alpinia galangal* Willd.** (COP / PGSY / 211)

LN : *Peravattai*

Decoction of rhizomes is used 3-4 times daily to treat rheumatism and diarrhoea.

***Curcuma aromatica* Salisb.** (COP / PGSY / 232)

LN : *Kasturi manjal*

Decoction of rhizomes one teaspoon full 2 times a day is used to reduce blood pressure.

***Zingiber zerumbet* Rosc. ex Smith** (COP / PGSY / 299)

LN : *Katuinj*

The rhizomes are use as a flavouring agent and carminative.

Zygophyllaceae

***Fagonia cretica* Linn.** (COP / PGSY / 241)

LN : *Chittigra*

The stems, leaves and flowers are put together and prepared a decoction and used as bitter tonic (5-10ml of decoction taken internally at bed time) against stomach problem.

Discussion

The present study records 102 folk medicinal plants used by *Madugga*

tribes of Siruvani forest. The data obtained by interviewing these tribal healers indicate that there is considerable knowledge about the use of herbal remedies among *Madugga* tribes. Literature survey (Kirtikar & Basu, 1935; Chopra *et al*, 1956; Agarwal, 1986) showed that the chemical constituents and pharmacological actions of most of the species are already known to some extent.

Most of the preparations are used internally or applied externally in the form of infusion, decoction, paste or powder. Investigations on ethnomedicinal plants bring out clues for the phytochemical research people to better evaluate the efficiency of plant medicines from various species.

During this survey, we have identified 42 families and 40 different prescriptions for various diseases. Around thirteen plants, viz. *Abrus precatorius*, *Aristolochia indica*, *Celosia cristata*, *Emblia officinalis*, *Euphorbia hirta*, *Ocimum sanctum*, *Piper longum*, *Terminalia bellirica*, *Tylophora indica*, *Wedelia calendulacea*, *Withania somnifera*, *Azima tetracantha* and *Calotropis gigantea* have been found useful in cough, bronchitis and asthma.

The plant like *Abrus precatorius*, *Acacia concinna*, *Achyranthes aspera*, *Bridelia retusa*, *Cassia tora*, *Clerodendrum inerme*, *Datura metel*, *Euphorbia hirta*, *Helianthus debilis*, *Mappia foetida*, *Mentha piperita*, *Randia dumetorum*, *Santalum album*, *Wedelia calendulacea*, *Wrightia tinctoria* and *Sida cordifolia* are

useful for various kinds of skin infections. We have also observed that the plant *Mappia foetida* which is now-a-days explored for its anti-tumour properties, occurs abundantly in Siruvani forest and the tribals use its leaves for increasing lactation in cattles and the leaf paste is used in healing wounds. The *Madugga* tribes use *Dolichos lablab*, *Drosera peltata*, *Smithia germiniflora* and *Strychnos nux-vomica* as anti-fatigue and anti-ageing drugs. The plants like *Mucuna prurita*, *Pterocarpus marsupium* and *Withania somnifera* are used as aphrodisiac.

This paper provides a report on ethnomedicinal uses of some important plants locally available for curing various diseases. In Siruvani, the medicinal plants present are still not fully explored. A thorough investigation may provide remedy for different ailments and also raw materials for undertaking further scientific research to confirm the findings.

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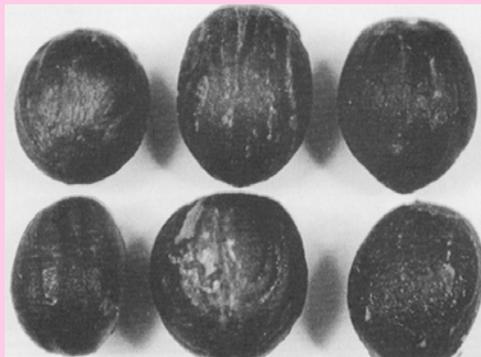
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In this column for the benefit of our patrons we are trying to include simple tips from medical experts of various systems of medicine

Long beautiful, silky, bouncing and dark black hairs are considered to be one of the important features of beauty. But reverse condition is not accepted easily by anybody. If there are patches on the scalp with baldness, with absolutely no hair, it is called Alopecia rather more specific Alopecia areata. Alopecia is a highly unpredictable, autoimmune skin disease resulting in the loss of hair on the scalp and elsewhere on the body. This common but very challenging and capricious disease affects approximately 1.7 per cent of the population overall. Due to the fact that much of the public is still not familiar with Alopecia areata, the disease can have a profound impact on one's life and functional status, both at work and at living place.

In Alopecia areata, the affected hair follicles are mistakenly attacked by a person's own immune system (white blood cells), resulting in the arrest of the hair growth stage. Alopecia areata usually starts with one or more small, round, smooth bald patches on the scalp and can progress to total scalp hair loss (Alopecia totalis) or complete body hair loss (Alopecia universalis). It occurs in males and females of all ages and races; however, onset most often begins in childhood and can be psychologically devastating. Although not life-threatening; most certainly life-altering, and its sudden

Alopecia and its Ayurvedic management



onset, recurrent episodes and unpredictable course have a profound psychological impact on the lives of those disrupted by this disease. It does not cause any physical pain and people with the condition are generally healthy otherwise. In Alopecia universalis, however, loss of eyelashes and eyebrows and hair in the nose and ears can make the person more vulnerable to dust, germs, and foreign particles entering in them.

Causes

In Alopecia areata, immune system cells called white blood cells

attack the rapidly growing cells in the hair follicles that make the hair. The affected hair follicles become small and drastically slow down hair production. Fortunately, the stem cells that continually supply the follicle with new cells do not seem to be targeted. So the follicle always has the potential to regrow hair. Scientists do not know exactly, why the hair follicles undergo these changes, but they suspect that a combination of genes may predispose some people to the disease. In those who are genetically predisposed, some type of trigger, perhaps a virus or something in the person's environment brings on the attack against the hair follicles.

Alopecia areata often occurs in people whose family members have other autoimmune diseases, such as diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis, thyroid disease, systemic lupus erythematosus, pernicious anemia or Addison's disease. People who have Alopecia areata do not usually have other autoimmune diseases, but they do have a higher occurrence of thyroid disease, atopic eczema, nasal allergies and asthma.

Ayurvedic aspect about Alopecia areata

In Ayurveda this disease has been discussed in a greater length as *Indraloopta*. It has been considered by Sushrutacharya as a type of skin disorder. Ayurveda believes that if there are problems in the functioning of the *bhrajak pitta*, *vata* and metabolism of *ashthi*, there is a pathogenesis taking place by virtue of which there are possibility of epilation of hair follicles

along with the roots from the region of scalp. There exists a patchy baldness. That is known as *Indraloopta*.

Prognosis

There is every chance that patient's hair will regrow, but it may also fallout again. No one can predict when it might regrow or fallout. The course of the disease varies from person to person. Some people lose just a few patches of hair, then the hair regrows and the condition never recurs. Other people continue to lose and regrow hair for many years. A few lose all the hair on their head; some lose all the hair on their head along with face and body. Even in those who lose all their hair, the possibility for full regrowth remains. In some, the initial hair regrowth is white, with a gradual return of the original hair colour. In most, the regrown hair is ultimately of the same colour and texture as the original hair.

Do's and Don't

In addition to the treatments to help hair grow, there are measures that can be taken to minimize the physical dangers or discomforts of lost hair.

- Sunscreens are important for the scalp, face and all exposed areas.
- Eyeglasses (or sunglasses) protect the eyes from excessive sun, dust and debris when eyebrows or eyelashes are missing.
- Wigs, caps or scarves protect the scalp from the sun and keep the head warm.
- In diet, Ayurveda advocates that these patients should not take salty, sour, spicy and pungent food.

Ayurvedic management of Alopecia areata

In Ayurveda the diet of patients is streamlined. Drugs like *Kukutandatwak Bhasma*, *Ajasthibhasma*, *Pravalpishti*, *Muktapishti*, *Shauktik pishti*, etc. are recommended under the supervision of a doctor. Since, alopecia is a skin disease some herbs like *Manjistha*, *Sariva*, *Kadeera*, *Karanja beeja*, *Neem*, etc. which improve blood circulation, reduce the itching and act against microbes are given.

There are certain pastes, which are specially advocated for these conditions. They are to be applied on that part of scalp with patchy baldness as a local therapy. Some of them are as follows:

1. *Romasanjanana Lepa* to be applied on the scalp.
2. *Jaipal beej* may be rubbed with either water or cow's urine and to be applied on that patch
3. *Hastidanti mashi* along with *Daruharidra kalka* to be applied on the patch.

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