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MEDICINAL PLANT LEAVES USED BY LOCAL PRACTITIONERS OF COIMBATORE DISTRICT, TAMIL NADU, INDIA

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ABSTRACT

This present investigation was an attempt to an ethno botanical survey which was carried out by the local practitioners of Coimbatore district in Tamil Nadu. During the survey 48 medicinal plant leaves are identified which were used as medicine for several diseases either in single or in combination with some other ingredients. In the first phase the Botanical Name, Family, Local Name and uses of leaves have been discussed and noted.

INTRODUCTION: Plants have been used in traditional medicine for several thousand years ¹. Traditional healers provide considerable information about the use of many plants or plant parts as medicine. According to world health organization, 80% of people in developing countries still depend on local medicinal plants to fulfill their primary health needs ².

In India alone three traditional systems of medicine include Ayurvedic, Siddha and Unani are using over 7,500 plant species ³. During the past few decades there has been an increasing interest in the study of medicinal plants and their traditional use in different parts of the world ⁴⁻⁵. The importance of gathering information on medicinal plants is to initiate their proper scientific management and exploitation for the economic development of the area.

Ethno botany and ethno medical studies are today recognized as the most viable method of identifying new medicinal plants or refocusing on those earlier reported for bio active constituents. Several studies have revealed that tribal population, not only depend on plant based resources for medicines, food, forage and fuel, but also play a vital role in natural resource

management that forms the core aspect of conservation biology ⁶. Today, many indigenous herbal remedies remain largely undocumented or recognized as potential forms of treatment and consequently continue to be used by only small groups of indigenous populations.

The present work was carried out to explore the medical remedies of some medicinal plant leaves used by the local peoples of Coimbatore district in Tamil Nadu for the treatment of various human ailments.

MATERIALS AND METHODS: The field investigations were conducted in villages of the study area. Field trips were carried out in different seasons regularly between June 2008 – December 2010. The data's are based on first hand information gathered from native health practitioners and other knowledgeable persons. Semi- structured questionnaire was prepared in local language and interviews were taken from them. The information for particular ailments was cross checked through the repeated queries during the interviews to get accurate and valid information. The information's were compared with those available in different literature source ^{7, 8, 9, 10}.

The plant specimens were collected during survey and were identified with help of "Flora of Presidency of Madras¹¹ and Flora of Tamil Nadu Carnatic¹²". They were later verified at botanical survey of India, Southern circle, Coimbatore, India.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION: Ethno botanical uses and the data about treatments of various ailments based on the information gathered from local practitioners by using questionnaires are given in **table 1**. The present investigation comprises 48 plants species distributed over 25 angiosperm families and their

leaves which are commonly used by the local people of Coimbatore in traditional medicine for treatment of various ailments like jaundice, skin diseases, fever, diarrhea, asthma etc. Even though medicines in allopathic systems are available for the above diseases they cause so many side effects. The present study will help us in understanding, how ancient human health of wealth was safeguarded by traditional nutritional and medicinal systems. Further this can open new visions in medico- botanical systems to find a remedy to uproot incurable diseases.

TABLE 1: LIST OF PLANTS AND MEDICINAL USES OF THEIR LEAVES

Botanical names	Family	Local name	Mode of Uses
<i>Abutilon indicum</i> L.	Malvaceae	Thuthi	Decoction of leaf juice is given for pile's. Leaf paste are also applied for bleeding piles .
<i>Acalypha fruticosa</i> Forssk.	Euphorbiaceae	Sinni	Leaf with salt taken orally for stomach pain.
<i>Acalypha indica</i> L.	Euphorbiaceae	Kuppaimeni	Fresh Leaf juice is applied over cuts and wounds for faster healing .
<i>Achyranthus aspera</i> L.	Amaranthaceae	Nayuruvi	Leaf paste is applied to treat cuts and wounds.
<i>Adhatoda vasica</i> Nees.	Acanthaceae	Adathodai	Leaf is used to treat asthma.
<i>Alternanthera sessilis</i> L.	Amaranthaceae	Ponnankanni	Leaves used for the treatment of jaundice.
<i>Andrographis paniculata</i> L.	Acanthaceae	Nilavempu	Leaf paste is applied topically at the bitten site of scorpion, snake and bettle.
<i>Aristolochia bracteolata</i> L.	Aristolochiaceae	Aduthinnapalai	Leaf paste used to treat dandruff
<i>Aristolochia indica</i> L.	Aristolochiaceae	Eswara mulili	Leaf paste is used for eczema.
<i>Azadirachta indica</i> A.Juss.	Meliaceae	Vembu	Leaf decoction relieves stomach pain during menses.
<i>Bacopa monnieri</i> L.	Scrophulariaceae	Neerbrami	Leaf paste is used to treat small pox and skin diseases.
<i>Barleria prionitis</i> L.	Acanthaceae	Sullimullu	Leaf juice used to cure fever.
<i>Cadiospermum helicacabum</i> L.	Sapindaceae	Mudakathan kodi	Leaf juice mixed with honey is given to cure cough.
<i>Cassia auriculata</i> L.	Caesalpiniaceae	Avarai	The leaves decoction is used to take orally to control rheumatic pain.
<i>Cassia occidentalis</i> L.	Caesalpiniaceae	Avarai	Leaves paste reduce obesity.
<i>Cassia tora</i> L.	Caesalpiniaceae	Peithagarai	Leaf paste is applied externally to heal bone fractures.
<i>Catharanthus roseus</i> G.Don.	Apocynaceae	Tagarai	Leaf paste used for curing skin diseases.
<i>Centella asiatica</i> (L.) Urb.	Apiaceae	Nithyakalyani	Leaf Juice is used for headache and wound.
<i>Chrysanthemum morifolium</i> Ramat.	Asteraceae	Vallarai	Fresh juice used for skin diseases, improve memory, control diabetics.
<i>Cleome viscosa</i> L.	Capparidaceae	Seventhi	Leaf paste is applied eternally on wounds.
<i>Clerodendrum bracteatum</i> Wall. Ex Walp.	Verbenaceae	Naikaduku	Leaf Juice is used to treat earache.
<i>Coccinia grandis</i> (L.) J. Voigt.	Cucurbitaceae	Salingi	Leaf Juice is used to treat fever.
<i>Coleus aromaticus</i> Benth.	Lamiaceae	Kovai	Leaf juice is mixed with butter to treat skin diseases.
<i>Cynodon dactylon</i> L. Pers.	Poaceae	Karpuravalli	Leaf juice is taken orally by children to treat cold and cough.
<i>Digera muricata</i> (L.) Mart.	Amaranthaceae	Arugampullu	Leaves used for curing wound and blood clotting.
<i>Datura metal</i> L.	Solanaceae	Thoiya kerai,	Leaves are used as vegetable in constipation, dysuria and calculi.
<i>Eclipta prostrata</i> L.	Asteraceae	Umattai	Leaf Paste is applied to relieve pains.
<i>Gymnenma sylvestre</i> R.Br.	Asclepidaceae	Karisalan Kanni	Leaf powder is mixed with coconut oil and used as hair oil.
		Sirukurinchan	Extract of leaves taken orally along with milk for diabetes

<i>Hibiscus rosa – sinensis</i> L.	Malvaceae	semparuthi	Fresh leaves paste is applied on the hair for healthy black hair.
<i>Lawsonia inermis</i> L.	Lythraceae	Maruthani	Leaf powder is mixed with coconut oil and used as hair oil.
<i>Leucas aspera</i> (Willd.) Link.	Lamiaceae	Thumbai	Leaves are boiled and the vapor is inhaled to cure head ache.
<i>Lippia nodiflora</i> Mich.	Verbenaceae	Poduthali	Leaf paste is used to treat swelling and wound.
<i>Mukia maderaspatana</i> (L.) M. Roemer.	Cucurbitaceae	Musumusukai	Leaf powder is mixed with boiled rice or honey to cure cold and cough.
<i>Murraya koenigii</i> (L.) Sprengel.	Rutaceae	Karuveppilai	Leaves used for indigestion. Leaves used for preparing hair oil.
<i>Ocimum santum</i> Linn.	Lamiaceae	Tulsi	Leaf juice mixed with honey is taken orally to treat cough and cold.
<i>Oxalis corniculata</i> L.	Oxalidaceae	Pulliyari	Juice is used for eye disease.
<i>Pavonia procumbens</i> (Wight et Arn.) Walp.	Malvaceae	Saligi	Leaf grind with buttermilk and taken orally to cure ulcer.
<i>Phyllanthus amarus</i> Schum. &Thnn.	Euphorbiaceae	Keezhanelli	Fresh leaves are ground and mixed with butter milk to take internally for jaundice.
<i>Piper betle</i> Linn.	Piperaceae	Vettilai	Juice used as eye drops in painful eyes. Leaf juice mixed with honey is given to cure cough for children.
<i>Ricinus communis</i> L.	Euphorbiaceae	Amanakku	The leaf is used to tie the breast to increase secretion of milk in women.
<i>Sesbania aegytiaca</i> Pers.	Fabaceae	Chithagathi	Leaf decoction used in diarrhea, itches and skin eruption.
<i>Sesbania grantiflora</i> Pers.	Fabaceae	Agathi	Leaf decoction is used to eliminate the worms in stomach.
<i>Solanum nigrum</i> L.	Solanaceae	Manathakkali	Fresh leaves are taken orally to cure mouth ulcer.
<i>Solanum torvum</i> Sw.	Solanaceae	Sundaikkai	Leaf juice is taken orally to reduce body heat.
<i>Solanum trilobatum</i> L.	Solanaceae	Thuthuvai	Leaf juice is taken orally to treat cough and cold.
<i>Tribulus terrestris</i> L.	Zygophyllaceae	Nerungi	Decoction of leaf is given in Kidney related diseases.
<i>Tridax procumbens</i> L.	Asteraceae	Vettukkaya thalai	Juice applied on wounds, boils and used to stop bleeding.
<i>Vitax negundo</i> L.	Verbenaceae	Nocchi	Leaves are boiled in water and the vapor inhaled to relief severe head ache and cold.

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