

## MEDICINAL PLANTS USED IN SNAKEBITE AND SCORPION STING BY GONDS AND KOLAMS OF ADILABAD DIST. A. P.

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### ABSTRACT

This paper documents the traditional knowledge of medicinal plants that are in use by ethnic people of Adilabad district, Andhra Pradesh during January 2010 – December 2011 (Two years). The study was done through formal and informal meeting with these people, and has resulted in the documentation of 15 angiosperm medicinal plants. All the species have been collected, identified and relevant data have been provided. In the enumeration, data was presented alphabetically with the botanical name, family, vernacular name, habit, habitat, disease and mode of usage.

**Keywords:** Ethnobotany, Tribals, Adilabad district, Andhra Pradesh, India.

### INTRODUCTION

India is endowed with a rich biological heritage. It has more than 53 million tribal people under 300 tribal communities, constituting about 8% of the total population of the country. The tribal knowledge regarding the uses of plants for various purposes indicates their general awareness and intimate dependence on the surrounding plants. This information is generally passed on verbally from one generation to another. The utility of all the wild plants for various purposes was not recognized in one day or in one century; it is the result of the progressive development of human cultures. With the process of civilization and urbanization rapidly advancing, there is an imminent damage of losing forever these valued treasures of information. Because of lot of urban influence on the local population. The communication systems transport and educational facilities are also gradually improving. The natural consequence of all these developments would be a partial or total loss of the botanical folk-lore. Concurrently, the ethnic therapy should also be restored and maintained, since this provides enormous data regarding the medicinal properties of plants not known to the modern men.

Adilabad district is one of the 23 districts of Andhra Pradesh and situated in the north western corner of the state. The district is situated between 77°46' and 80.01', of the Eastern longitudes and 18°40' and 19°56', of Northern latitudes. The district is situated on the northern boundary of Andhra Pradesh, forming a border with the Yeotmal and Chanda districts of Maharashtra on the north, east and western borders, Nizamabad and Karimnagar districts of Andhra Pradesh on the south and west.

Adilabad is known for its significant forests and Adivasi forest dwellers which include various tribal communities existing since centuries and has a strong social, historical and cultural background. The tribal community of Adilabad district includes primarily Kolams, Naikpods, Pardhans, Gonds, Thotis, Chenchus and Mathuras. The available information on ethno medicine (SCORPION STING, SNAKE BITE) is not only scanty but also scattered for Andhra Pradesh in general and Adilabad district in particular. The present article is intended to contribute to this growing body of knowledge by supplying information on the plant-based Ethnobotanical Knowledge curative techniques found in Adilabad district of Andhra Pradesh

### MATERIAL AND METHODS

The present data is outcome of extensive survey of medicinal plants in the Adilabad district have been under taken as case study during January 2010 – December 2011 (Two years) . The data were gathered personally from the tribal pockets and pastoral villages. For this purpose, the local Vaidyas / Vejjus/ Pujaris/ Vaddegudus/ Gunyas elderly people whose empirical knowledge was respected by every one in the area were interviewed besides owners of cattle,

goat and sheep besides. Data on local name of folk drug plants, part used, method of preparation, dosage recommended, and precautions were recorded for each medicinal claim. Medicine men were requested to accompany the senior Healer in the field to facilitate the identification of different plant drugs specially employed by them to treat the disease. The information was also discussed with different medicine men in other localities to validate the claims as far as possible. Based on the information and material provided by medicine men, the weight measurements in dosage forms were determined by using a scale either in the field or camp. Names of all key informants were noted and are available on request. In the study all the angiosperm medicinal plants have been collected, and identified with the local Floras and finally confirmed with Hebarium of Botanical Survey of India (BSI), All these medicinal plants have been preserved in the form of herbarium specimens following standard method These specimens have been housed in the Herbarium of the Department of botany Osmania university Andhra Pradesh for further reference.

### SCORPION STING

1. *Abutilon indium* (L.) Sweet. **Family name:** Malvaceae **Telugu:** Tutturu benda

Leaf paste is applied over the spot of scorpion sting.

2. *Achyranthes aspera* L. **Family name:** Amaranthaceae **Telugu:** Uttereni

Leaf paste is applied on hands for protection from scorpion sting. Scorpion can not bite if we apply the juice.

3. *Boswellia serrata* Colebr. **Family name:** Burseraceae **Telugu:** Andugu

The leaves are burnt and inhaled, the leaves are also applied on the bitten area.

4. *Cyperus rotundus* L. **Telugu:** Thunga

Dried tubers are pasted and applied topically on bitten site of scorpion.

5. *Gymnema sylvestre* (Retz.) R. Br. **Family name:** Asclepiadaceae **Telugu:** Podapathri

The root paste is applied on scorpion sting.

6. *Strychnos potatorum* L.f. **Family name:** Loganiaceae **Telugu:** Chilaginja, Chilla

Seeds pasted by rubbing on rock and applied on the spot.

7. *Tephrosia purpurea* (L.) Pers. **Family name:** Fabaceae **Telugu:** Vempali

Leaf paste is applied over the sting, the bitten area is exposed to heat of match.

#### SNAKE BITE

1. ***Ailanthus excelsa*** Roxb. **Family name:** Simaroubaceae  
**Telugu:** Peddamanu

1 -2 glasses of stem bark juice is given internally to the person on snake bite immediately after the snake bite, the leaf paste of same tree is also applied on the bite spot.

2. ***Albizia lebbbeck*** (L.) Willd. **Family name:** Mimosaceae **Telugu:** Dirisena

The root juice is extended by adding 3 – 4 pepper seeds, half cup of juice is given to drink by the patient and a little paste is also to be smeared on the bite spot.

3. ***Ficus glomerata*** Roxb. **Family name:** Moraceae **Telugu:** Medi

The stem bark paste is applied over the injury of snake bite.

4. ***Ficus tinctoria*** Forst.f. **Family name:** Moraceae

Young leaves are inserted in the ears as an anti dotes for snake bite.

5. ***Mimosa pudica*** L. **Family name:** Mimosaceae **Telugu:** Athipathi

Leaf paste is applied over snake bite.

6. ***Soymida febrifuga*** (Roxb.) Juss. **Family name:** Meliaceae **Telugu:** Somidi

50 ml decoction of stem bark is given orally immediately after snake bite.

7. ***Tiliacora acuminata*** (Lamk) Miers **Family name:** Menispermaceae **Telugu:** Kappa teega

Leaf paste is applied on the effected area.

8. ***Tylophora indica*** (Burm.f.) Merrill. **Family name:** Asclepiadaceae **Telugu:** Mekameyanaku

Leaves are ground to paste and given to smell.

#### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

About 85 percentage of rural population of the district are depending on agricultural, Podu cultivation (Shifting cultivation in the forest) and Minor forest products collection. The Gonds and Kolams tribal communities of the district have a tremendous traditional knowledge on healing of various bites. These traditional knowledge practices are most valuable to the local people, due to inaccessibility of health care facilities, tribal people completely depend up on these healers for accessing quick remedies particularly scorpion sting and snake bite as a first aid treatment. The author has interviewed 20 healers and recorded the methods of collection of medicinal plant parts and methods of preparation of the drugs used by them. Most often the local tribal people get affect by wildlife when they go for collection of minor forest products and during working on forest lands for agriculture. The local healers have tremendous knowledge to treat snake bite and scorpion sting. The author has recorded 15 species of medicinal plants during the past five years which are being used by the healers belonging to 14 genera of 11 families of angiosperms. In all a total of 8 remedies were recorded under scorpion sting and 8 remedies were recorded for snake bite. The following plants are commonly utilized by the Gond and Kolam healers of the district are *Abutilon indicum*, *Cyperus rotundus*, *Strychnos aspera*, *Boswellia serrata*, *Gymnema sylvestre*, *Strychnos potatorum*, *Tephrosia purpurea*, *Ailanthus excelsa*, *Albizia lebbbeck*, *Ficus glomerata*, *Ficus tinctoria*, *Mimosa pudica*, *Soymida febrifuga*, *Tylophora indica* and *Tiliacora acuminata*. Use of Indigenous herbal medicine is first priority among the tribal communities in the district. In the tribal areas people first approach to the local herbal practitioners to cure of any wildlife bites. Non availability of health facilities, lack of transport and high cost allopathic medicines compels the people to use traditional herbal medicine for their health care. The author has recorded several

forms of medicines for scorpion sting like paste of fresh leaves, tubers, seeds and root bark. For snake bite leaf paste and fresh juices of stem bark and roots and decoctions. Healers provide medicine in free of cost. About 80 percentage of the rural tribal communities strongly believe in traditional herbal medicine particularly scorpion sting and snake bite and curative level is also high in the region.

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