

Survey of Sporadic Medicinal Plants in Kanjamalai, Salem District

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I. Introduction

India harbours a wide range of medicinal plants mostly used in Ayurvedic, Unani Siddha, Homeopathic, Allopathic and other alternate medicinal practices such as folk medicine, home remedies, household remedies, naturopathy, tantra-therapy, Amchi and tribal medicine. The plants used in alternate medicine are awaiting a touch of modern knowledge. A rough conception is that out of 17,500 flowering plant species known from India, more than 4000 species are used as medicinal plants of which 300 species yield gum and dyes and about 100 species yield essential oils and are used as raw materials in drug industry. About 200 drugs are of animal and mineral origin. Medicinal plants, the nature's pharmacy and green gold of the earth have been used virtually in all human cultures around the world as a source of safe and effective medicine. A recent survey conducted by WHO approximates that 80% of the world population depends mainly on the traditional medicines for primary health care (Bannerman, 1983). A good number of our population particularly those living in rural areas depend largely on herbal remedies for the treatment of different types of diseases. It indicates the importance of the individual plants in the health care system (Kunwar and Bussman, 2008). Majority of plants is harvested from the forest, the principal repository of herbal plants. Hence, the present study was carried out to explore the medicinal potential in the Kanjamalai reserve forest at Siddhar kovil of Salem District. The variability in altitude, latitude, climate, rainfall and soil has contributed to the rich floristic diversity of the hill which can rightly be called a treasure house of medicinal plants.

II. Materials and Methods

Survey and Collection of Information To get first hand data and further for confirming authenticity of the existing information, extensive field surveys were undertaken from April 2014 to March 2015 in Kanjamalai Reserve Forest at Siddhar kovil of Salem District. During the course of study, 12 field trips were carried out in the study area once in a month. Surveys were made in the wilderness along the altitudinal transects reaching the timber line zones and in the surrounding natural habitats of Kanjamalai.

During the survey period, adopting the method of Jain (1967), the qualitative tools such as conversations and open discussions with the informants, the local traditional healers and elders of the area having practical knowledge of plants in medicine either for self medication or for others were held. A total of 5 informants comprising 4 males and 1 female were identified between the ages of 50 and 75. These informants were approached to share their knowledge about the plants used and parts harvested.

Identification

Identification was done by using **Flora of the Presidency of Madras, Gamble and Fischer (1915-1936) and The Flora of the Tamilnadu Carnatic, Matthew (1981, 1982, 1983, 1988)**. Flora of Tamilnadu Series (Nair and Henry, 1983; Henry *et al.*, 1987 & Henry *et al.*, 1989) was used at best for nomenclature. The plants were enumerated following the Natural system of Classification of Bentham & Hooker with binomial, local name and uses.

Enumeration Of Sporadic Medicinal Plants.

Cocculus hirsutus L. L.N: Kattu kodi. Plant used in leprosy and skin diseases.

Cissampelos pareira L.L.N: Ponmusutai Plant used in muscle relaxant and hemorrhage.

Sida cordifolia L.L.N: Arivalmanai poondu. Leaves used in skin diseases

Polycarpaea corymbosa Lam.L.N: Nilaisedachi.

Calophyllum inophyllum L.L.N: Punnai. Plant used in migraine, skin problems and eye inflammations.

Oxalis corniculata L. L.N: Malai pulichan. Leaves are used to treat stomachache and scurvy. *Aegle marmelos* Corr. L.N: Vilvam. Ripe fruit is used in indigestion, stomachache and diarrhoea.

Atalantia monophylla Correa. L.N: Kattukkichali. Oil from berries is used in rheumatism. *Murraya paniculata* (L) Jack. L.N: Kattu karuvepilai. Leaf powder is used in diarrhoea.

Toddalia asiatica Lam. L.N: Milagaranai. Leaf is used to treat diarrhoea, wounds and ulcer. *Ailanthus excelsa* Roxb. L.N: Peru. Bark is used as febrifuge, expectorant and antiseptic.

Melia azedarach L. L.N: Malai vembu. Leaves are used in skin disease.

Cissus quadrangularis L. L.N: Pirandi. Stem is applied topically for fracture of bones.

Cardiospermum halicacabum L. L.N: Mudakkattan. Plants are used in rheumatism.

Moringa concanensis Nim. L.N: Kattumurungai. Root is used in palsy and paralytic affections.

Dalbergia latifolia Roxb. L.N: Itti. Plant is used in stomachache, diarrhoea, leprosy and obesity.

Pterocarpus marsupium Roxb. L.N: Vengai. Bruised leaves are useful in skin diseases.

Pterocarpus santalinus L. L.N: Semmaram. Leaves are used in skin diseases.

Cassia auriculata L.L.N: Avaram. Root is used in skin diseases and leaves are antihelminthic.

Cassia siamea Lam. L.N: Thagarai. Stem barks are used to heal wounds.

Hardwickia binata Roxb. L.N: Kodapalai. Balsam is used for gonorrhoea.

Pterolobium indicum A. Rich. L.N: Indumullu. Plant is used in inflammation and arthritis.

Albizzia amara Boivin. L.N: Thurinji. The leaf paste is applied on head to wash hairs.

Mimosa pudica L. L.N: Tottalvadi. Decoction of root is useful in gravelly complaints.

Syzygium jambolanum (L.) Alst. L.N: Naval. Leaves are boiled and used in sore eyes.

Diplocyclos palmatus (L) Jaff. L.N: Ivelan. Leaves are used in skin diseases and inflammation.

Trichosanthes dioica Roxb. L.N: Kombuppudalai. Root is used as hydragogue and cathartic.

Mollugo pentaphylla L. L.N: Padagam. Plant is used in stomachache and sepsis.

Centella asiatica L. L.N: Vallarai. Plant is used in leprosy and for improving memory.

Alangium salvifolium (Linn.) Wan. L.N: Alingi. Root bark is used in fever and in skin diseases.

Chomella asiatica O.Kze. L.N: Therani. Leaves are used in skin diseases.

Plumbago zeylanica L. L.N: Kodiveli. Stem and leaves are used for healing wounds.

Madhuca latifolia (Roxb.) Macb. L.N: Kattuillupai. Stem bark decoction is given in itching.

Azima tetracantha Lam. L.N: Chankamullu. Root is used in rheumatism.

Caralluma adscendens R.Br. L.N: Kallimulayan. Stem is used in stomach disorders.

Hemidesmus indicus R.Br. L.N: Nannari. Root is used in leucorrhoea and rheumatism

Datura discolor L. L.N: Karu-umathai. Leaf is used to treat wounds.

Solanum pubescens Wild. L.N: Kattusundai. Fruits are used in asthma.

Martynia annua L.L.N. Telkodukkukai. Root is used in asthma and itching

Adhatoda vasica Nees. L.N: Adhatodai. Roots and leaves are used in cough and asthma.

Rhinacanthus communis L. L.N: Nagamalli. Roots and leaves are useful in ringworm.

Leonotis nepetaefolia R.Br. L.N: Singakadhu. Flowers are used to treat wounds.

Lantana camara L. L.N: Unni. Decoction of plants is given in tetanus and rheumatism.

Lantana indica Roxb. L.N: Venunni. Leaves are used as a cure for snake-bite.

Gmelina arborea L. L.N: Kumil. Plant is used in snake bite and scorpion sting.

Stachytarpheta indica Vahl. L.N; Seemai Nayuruvi. Plant is used to treat ulcer and fever.

Tectona grandis L.L.N: Thekku. Wood powder is used for headache and for swelling.

Vitex leucoxylon L. L.N: Nirnochi. Fruits are used in expulsion worms.

Loranthus longiflorus Desv. L.N: Pulluri. Stem astringent, narcotic, used to treat wounds.

Santalum album L. L.N: Sandanam. Wood paste is applied to cure pimples.

Phyllanthus emblica L. L.N: Nelli. Plant promoting hair growth and used as blood purifier.

Phyllanthus niruri L. Roxb. L.N: Kelanelli. Plant used in jaundice.

Ficus glomerata L.N: Athi. Root is used in dysentery, fruits edible and used in anaemia and have digestive, carminative and astringent properties.

Aloe vera (L) Burm. L.N: Chothukathalai. Plants are used in piles, rectal fissures and in expulsion of worms.

Scilla indica L. L.N: Kozhi-vengayam. Bulb is used as expectorant, cardiac tonic and as diuretic.

Actinopterys radiata L.L.N: Anaisuvadi. Leaf paste is applied to cure skin disease and cut wounds.

III. Observation And Results:

Analysis of data showed that 56 important plants are widely used for the treatment of various ailments among the people of Kanjamalai of Salem District of Tamilnadu. The present study listed out a total of 55 important angiospermic plants and 1 Pteridophytes with medicinal value. The angiospermic plants include Dicotyledons and monocotyledon. Within the dicotyledonous plants include polypetalae, gamopetalae and monochlamydeae. Plants surveyed in the Kanjamalai forest belong to different families.

Many findings from Kanjamalai are identical and similar with the report of Anonymous, 1956 and Chopra *et al.*, 1956. External applications as well as internal consumption are involved in the treatment of diseases. Analysis of administration revealed that external application is the major administration route used by the people. It was also observed that most of the preparations include single plant species. It was also observed that different parts of a single species are used to cure different ailments. Each medicinal plant is used either raw or in dried form as medicine. Especially, the underground parts are used in the dried form, which is either cut in to small pieces and powdered and stored.

A close look at the medicinal plants of southern tropical mixed dry deciduous forest in Kanjamalai reveals that they possess curative properties due to active principles. The documentation finds the hill a potential reservoir of medicinal plants. The current study may be of great use and interest to researchers, pharmaceutical industries and medical practitioners.

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