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A survey of traditional healthcare remedies used for Childrens ailments among the Viruthunagar District, Tamilnadu, India

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Abstract: The present study was carried out in some interior areas of Viruthunagar District, Tamilnadu. India, during 2012-2013 to collect the information of traditionally used medicinal plants by the communities. A total of 19 medicinal plants belonging to 16 families were used by local people to cure different children diseases. Results indicate that fresh plant materials were invariably preferred for treating ailments. Informations revealed that local communities largely depend on medicinal plants to meet their primary healthcare needs. They use ethnomedicinal plants to treat ailments like cold, cough, fever, headache, stomachache, diarrhoea, dysentery, skin diseases, poison bites, cut/ wounds etc.,

Keywords: Traditional knowledge, disease, local communities, traditional practices

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1. Introduction

In worldwide, millions of people rely on medicinal plants for primary health care, income generation and livelihood options. The medicinal properties of plants cover a marvelous involvement in the origin and advancement of many conventional herbal therapies. The use of folk medicine occurs in all societies around the world (Smitherman *et al*., 2005). As a result of their continual quest to find treatments for illnesses that are specific to their localities, human beings have developed an extensive pharmacopoeia of Medicinal plants (Kiringe, 2006). Approximately 10 million children under 5 years of age were reported to die annually throughout the world, mostly in developing countries (Rutherford et al., 2009). Of every 1000 children born in sub-Saharan Africa, approximately 170 die, compared with less than 10 of those who are born in developed countries. Disease management among women and children is dependent on herbs first and in case the condition deteriorates, then they seek services from modern health facilities (Kamatenesi and Oryem-origa, 2006). The extensive use of traditional medicine, mostly medicinal plants, in rural medical facilities are far, people are poor and cannot afford western medicine, socio-cultural barriers, the fact that traditional medicines have a wide acceptance, inadequate medicines and other medical supplies, shortage and low motivation of human

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resource (Kamatenesi *et al*., 2011). Over 80% of the world's population depends on medicinal plant species to meet their day-to-day healthcare needs (WHO, 2006). Rural household are rely heavily on plant resources for food and herbal medicine (Tabuti *et al*., 2003). The use of traditional medicine in rural population for day-to-day health care needs is close to 90%. In india, traditional medicine to provide health care for themselves and their children. Mothers have been reported to be the most important health worker for children. There is need to document traditional knowledge on plant medicines used in disease management among the children in Viruthunagar district, because they are often neglected or not given priority.

2. Material and Methods

2.1 Study site

The present study area lies between 9^{o} 31' 0" / 77^{o} 38'0^{0} E, Viruthunagar district was surrounded by the Western Ghats in the Western side of the Tamilnadu. The area of Srivilliputhur located in the foothills of Western Ghats. The present study carried out in the following villages Athikulam, Thailakulam, Pottalpatty, and Anaithalpatty.

2.2 Survey and data collection

The surveyed between 2012 to 2013 by carried out ethnobotanical survey with adult and old people who live in the area under study and know the practical uses of medicinal plants. Ethnobotanical informations were collected according to method suggested by Jain (1987). The ethnobotanical data (Local name of the plants, Mode of Preparations and Medicinal uses) were collected through the questionnaires, interviews and discussions among their local language. The questionnaires contains detailed information about the plants used. The collected plants were identified by using the Flora of Presidency of Madras (Gamble, 1935) and the Flora of Palni Hills (Mathew, 1991) were used to ascertain the nomenclature. The specimens in duplicate were deposited in the Department of Botany in Saraswathi Narayanan College, Madurai.

3. Results and Discussion

The survey includes various local plants of different families used by the local people to cure different problems . Information on 19 ethnomedicinal plant species belonging to 16 families has been enumerated along with their families and common name (Table -1). Different plant parts such as root, leaves, bark, fruits etc are administered with other products such as milk, water, sugar, etc., The study area was found to be rich in medicinal plants which are used different ailments. Most of these plants are seen to be growing in wild conditions and in order to keep their existence, it is essential to record important information regarding their uses as these plants could be on the way of extinction due to negligence. Most of the Plants utilized in day today life of human life, in the form of single or mixed with any other plant parts and other natural derivatives. Ethnobotany is perhaps most important method to study natural resources and their management by indigenous people. It enables us to work with local people to explore knowledge based on experiences of ages. Generally, fresh part of the plant is used for the preparation of medicine. When fresh plant parts are not used as simple drugs and some plants are used with some other plant parts. Literature search has shown that no such work on study site which is useful in different diseases has been done earlier, so there is an urgent need for creating awareness in the area about the importance of the flora and sustainable collection and conservation of important medicinal plants.

4. Conclusion

This present study revealed that the vital role of medicinal plants in children healthcare. This information is useful for future generation. The use of herbal medicine has always been part of human culture. The rising demand for medicinal plants has led to increased pressure on wild plant populations and shrinking habitats. It is obvious that the bulk of the plants traded in the local markets are sourced from the wild which could result in local extinction. There is, therefore, the need to encourage domestication and cultivation of medicinal plants as well as put in place conservation measures to ensure sustainable source of plant materials.

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Table-1: List of Medicinal Plants used for Children diseases in Viruthunagar District, Tamilnadu. India.

Botanical name	Family	Vernacular name	Mode of use
Achyranthes aspera L.	Amaranthaceae	Naiyuruvi	Dried whole plant boiled and filtered is given to children (5-10yre) for 3-5 days to kill intestinal worms
Acorus calamus L.	Araceae	Vasambu	One teaspoonful of root paste with a cup of milk at bed time is given to the children (3-10yrs) for 2-3 months to cure stammering.
Adhatoda zeylanica Medicus.	Acanthaceae	Adathoda	Half cup of decoction made out of dried leaves is given once a day to the children (5-10yrs) for 2-3 days to treat dysentery.
Aegle marmelos (L.) Corr. serr	Rutaceae	Vilvam	Powder made out of dried leaves is given with warm water twice a day to the children (2-10yrs) for 2-4 days to check fever.
Ageratum conyzoides L.	Asteraceae	Appakotti	One teaspoonful of dried powdered leaves with sugar is given twice a day the children (6-10yrs) for 1-2 days to check diarrhoea.
Allium sativum L.	Liliaceae	Poondu	2 - 3 roasted leaves are given with hot water twice a day to the children (6-10yrs) for 2-3 days to treat dysentery.
Alstonia scholaris (L.) R.Br	Apocynaceae	Elilapalai	One teaspoonful of dried powdered roots with honey is given daily after meals to the children (5-10yrs) for 1-2 days to kill intestinal worms.
Alternanthera sessilis Dc.	Amaranthaceae	Arakeerai	Half cup of decoction of leaves is given once a day to the children (3-10yrs) for 2-3 days to treat stomach pain and fever. One teaspoonful of dried root powder with honey is given once a day to children (5-10yrs) for 1-2 days to kill intestinal worms.
Argemone Mexicana L.	Papaveraceae	Peimiratti	Dried powder roots mixed with olive oil is applied externally twice a day to the children (5-10yrs) for 1-3 weeks to treat ringworm infection.
Azadirachta indica A.juss.	Meliaceae	Vembu	Dried powdered leaves are given with hot water daily in the morning to the children (5-10yrs) for 7days to check measles.
Calotropis procera (L.) R.Br	Asclepiadaceae	Vellerukku	Decoction of root is given thrice a day to the children (4-10yrs) for 2-3 days to treat fever.
Cassia fistula L.	Caesalpinaceae	Kondrai	A half cup of decoction of leaves is given twice a day to the children (2-10yrs) for 1-3 days to check fever.
Catharanthus roseus (L.) Don.	Apocynaceae	Nithya-kalyani	Juice of the leaves is applied externally thrice a day to the children (new born to 10yrs) for 2-3 days to check cuts and wounds.
Curcuma longa L.	Zingiberaceae	Manjal	Decoction of rhizome is given twice a day to the children (2-10yrs) for 3-5 days against measles.
Cuscuta reflexa L.	Convolvulaceae	Akasavalli	One of crushed stem juice is applied externally once a day to the children (4-10yrs) for 3-5 days against swollen tonsillitis.
Indigofera tinctoria L.	Fabaceae	Civanar vembu	Paste of the leaves made into pills and 1 to 2 pills are given twice a day to the children (8-10yrs) for 2-3 days to check stomach pain and blood dysentery.
Murrya koeingii (L.) Sprengel	Rutaceae	Karuvepalai	A half cup of decoction of leaves is given to the children (4-10yrs) for 3 to 5 days to cure fever.
Ocimum sanctum L.	Lamiaceae	Thulasi	A half cup of decoction of leaves is given once a day to the children (4-10yrs) for 3-5 days to cure cough and bronchitis.
Vitex negundo Linn	Verbenaceae	Notchi	A half cup of decoction of leaves with black pepper is given once a day to the children (6-10yrs) for 1-2 weeks to check skin diseases.

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