



REGULAR ARTICLE

ETHANOBOTANICAL STUDIES ON *ACHYRANTHES ASPERA* LINN. AMONG THE FOLK PEOPLES OF TAMILNADU, SOUTH INDIA

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SUMMARY

The study documents indigenous *Achyranthes aspera* used for folk and tribal medicine in South Indian medicinal system. We have to take the survey among the village peoples and tribal peoples in concern district of Tamilnadu. The plant are commonly used for certain diseases and this is discussed with the literature.

Keywords: *Achyranthes aspera*, tribal medicine, Medicinal plants.

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1. Introduction

Medicinal plants represent an important health and also an economic component of biodiversity of the medicinal component of the flora of any country for conservation and sustainable use [1]. India has a rich history of using plants for medicinal purposes [2]. India is on the threshold of an herbal revolution with rich wealth of herbs and commands the world herbal scene. Every part of plant exhibits one or more medicinal properties. Same or different vegetation or forest types. Interestingly, it is in such areas that the native communities dominate and the use of traditional medicines are practiced

with their own lifestyles, customs, rituals and beliefs [3].

Indigenous knowledge of uses of medicinal plants of Tamilnadu state for the cure of many ailments is an ancient and still available among the tribal and local people and medicinal healers. These indigenous knowledge and traditional experiences are disappearing day by day with the advance of development and modernization. Therefore, an urgent need to document and list out these vast stores of knowledge through ethno botanical surveys among the peoples belongs to Tamilnadu State. The use of plant medicines plays an important role in daily health care. Local medicines are even preferred to modern medicines. They are of course less

expensive, but they are often regarded as being more “effective”. Herbal medicine even today plays an important role in rural areas and various locally produced drugs are still being used as household remedies for different ailments [4]. The indigenous communities of the region have learned to use the bio-resources around them for the treatment of diseases. They depend upon the bio-resources for their primary health care because they perceive that the traditional medicines have no or lesser side effects [5]. Although studies of medicinal plant use by Himalaya tribes have been conducted [6,7].

The main objective of the present study is to collect information on traditional uses of *Achyranthus aspera* used in the preparation of herbal drugs by the peoples of Tamilnadu belongs to tribes and various communities.

2. Materials and Methods

Erode and Coimbatore districts were selected for the ethnobotanical study. An Ethnobotanical survey of the *Achyranthus aspera* was conducted during August 2008 to January 2009. The data of the above plant were collected from the 10 individuals in each district and comprised of herbal practitioners, women and elders. A semi - structural questionnaire was used to extract information on types of ailments treated by the use of medicinal plants and plant parts used in treating the ailments [8,9].

To facilitate cross-checking of the data, the survey was disseminated to different age and gender classes to obtain local and common names of taxa and their traditional medicinal uses. These two species were identified through various floristic records [10] and the specimens

were deposited in Nandha college of pharmacy, Erode, Tamilnadu State, India.

Coimbatore district is the abode of several fascinating ethnic communities including Irulars, Kattunayakan, Kurumars, Kadar, Kattunayakan, Mudugar, Pulayan, Toda and Shuliga. Among them, Irulars are the largest community (70.7%). The same communities are also spread the nearest districts also. Field visits were conducted to several areas of the above peoples are living households.

3. Results and Discussion

The medicinal plants such as *Achyranthus aspera* used in different areas of Erode and Coimbatore districts. The plants that have been authenticated earlier for various diseases and ailments in the study are included in Table.1. The results show that gender and age class differ in their traditional knowledge with regard to medicinal plants reported. Males above 50 year of age had more traditional knowledge about medicinal plants and their uses than females. This may be attributed to their involvement in trade related activities. In most of the cases the older people were noted as being better informants and the vivid reason for this may be their personal experience of using these plants since old times. Respondents under 50 years of age were less aware of the potential of medicinal plants than their older counterparts who have gathered knowledge from the point of view of their traditional health care and their day to day practices. This difference in the perception of the two age classes will likely result in knowledge loss over time. Since ancient times plants have been indispensable sources of both preventive and curative traditional medicine preparations for human beings and livestock. Historical accounts of traditionally

used medicinal plants depict that different medicinal plants were in use as early as 5000 to 4000 BC in China, and 1600 BC by Syrians, Babylonians, Hebrews and Egyptians [11]. Traditional medicine refers to any ancient, culturally based healthcare practice different from scientific medicine and it is commonly regarded as indigenous, unorthodox, alternative or folk and largely orally transmitted practice

Table.1.Ethnobotanical medicinal value of *Achyranthus aspera* Linn.

used by communities with different cultures [12]. WHO also defined traditional medicine as health practices, approaches, knowledge and beliefs incorporating plant, animal and mineral based medicines, spiritual therapies, manual techniques and exercises applied to treat, diagnose and prevent illnesses or maintain well being [13,14].

S.No	Part used	Mode of administration	Disease/ailment/alleged to cure.
1	Root	Roots with the flowers of meusa ferra and seeds of Piper longum are taken in equal properties and powdered.Pills made,mixing with Jaggery are given:2-3 pills,3 times a day for a week	Leucoderma
2	Leaf	Crushed leaves to be applied on the wounds in cattle	Eliminates worms in cattle
3	Whole plant	Decotion of whole plant /root is given in asthma and in said to be useful in painful delivery	Asthma
4	Leaf	The paste of the leaf is applied to the treatment of bites of poisonous insects	Bites poisonous insects
5	Root powder	The root powder is used in the treatment of fever and pneumonia	fever
6	Root powder	Warm mustard oil mixed with decotion of plant is dropped into the ear in deafness and noises in the ear	Ear problem
7	Root powder	The root paste is given in urinary trouble	Urinary trouble
8	Stem	Used for tooth ache and gum problems	Tooth ache

The present investigation has brought to light certain little known potential ethno medicinal plants of therapeutic value employed to cure leucoderma, eliminates worm in cattle, asthma, bites poisonous insects, fever, to cure ear problem, urinary problem and tooth ache. We think that the present status of the economically and medicinally important plants of the study area needs to be determined in order to develop plans for their protection. Proper documentation of indigenous knowledge about the plants could be supportive in achievement of objectives. As every year a considerable amount of foreign exchange is spent for the import of drugs and

other products, sustainable utilization of indigenous drug resources in local pharmaceutical and herbal industries will increase the importance of the plant resources of these areas. Utilization of indigenous drug resources will increase the importance of the local industry on one hand and minimize the expenditure incurred on the purchase of foreign drugs on the other.

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