

## Traditional Herbal Remedies The Tribes Of Malayali In Shervarayan Hills (Yercaud), Salem District, Tamil Nadu

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### ABSTRACT

The Paper deals with the ethno-medico-botany of plant species Shervarayan Hills (Yercaud), Salem District, Tamil Nadu. Information on economic and medicinal utilization of plant species including at family, vernacular name (Tamil) and common name. The medicinal uses are described with details such as the part(s) used singly, in combination of other plants, methods of preparation and mode of administration. for the treatments has been presented. The paper deals with the selected indigenous medicinal plant namely *Cassia tora* (*Senna tora*. Linn) (Caesalpiniaceae) among the local people of the malayali tribe on the basis of wider use for different ailments.

**Keywords:** Ethno-medico-botany, herbal remedies, Shervarayan Hills (Yercaud), *Cassia tora* Linn (Caesalpiniaceae)

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### I. INTRODUCTION

The wonderful Flora and Fauna of the Indian Forests particularly the forests of Tamil Nadu is the source of research in the ethnobotanical field. Therefore, documentation of traditional knowledge and ethnobotanical information play an important role in scientific research (Awadh et al., 2004). The term ethnobotany was first introduced by the American botanist John Harshberger in 1896 as 'the study of plant use by humans'. Ethnobotany studies the relationship between humans and plants in all its complexity and is generally based on a detailed observation and study of the use a society made of plants. Because plants play an important role in almost every realm of human activity Ethnobotany focuses not only on medicinal plants, but also on other natural products derived from nature, such as: food, plants used in rituals, coloring agents, fiber plants, poisons, fertilizers, building materials for houses, household items, boat, etc. Herbal medicine is the oldest form of health care known to humanity and has been used in all cultures throughout history. In this regard India has a unique position in the world, where a number of recognized indigenous systems of medicine viz., Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani, Homeopathy, Yoga and Naturopathy are utilized for the health care of people. Thus the dependence of human beings on plants dates back to the very origin of human race and perhaps the first knowledge early man had acquired about plant was by sheer necessity, observation and experimentation which in course of time evolved into a special branch called 'Ethnobotany'. Ethnobotany encompasses many

fields including botany, biochemistry, pharamacognosy, toxicology, medicine, nutrition, agriculture, ecology, evolution comparative religion, sociology, anthropology, linguistics, cognitive studies, history and archeology, etc.

### II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

#### Study area

The Shervarayan Hills (Yercaud), is a major range of forest in the Eastern Ghats, rich in bio-diversity and tribal populations. It is located in the Yercaud, Salem District, Tamil Nadu. Eastern Ghats alone support about 1500 species of green plants, of which about 50% are having medicinal value. The cultural group of Shervarayan Hills comprise of Malayalis, Kavundars, Vanniars, Naikans, Chettiyars and other minor castes belonging various religions. Each community which have their own cultural, different traditions, different languages, different customs, etc., According to World Health Organization, approximately 80% of the people in the traditional medicines for primary health care needs depends on the use of medicinal plants. Traditional of Shervarayan Hills societies are ideal example of traditional knowledge system where small communities prevent incurable disease through the traditional methods, which came from their fathers or grand fathers and goes on to the next generation by oral worlds.

This region has played a significant role in the historical processes of Southern India and provides a mini model for understanding the South

India civilization. Though the millennia different tribes and local communities have been living there signatures and producing a mosaic cultures. Another important view of Shervarayan Hills (Yercaud) is its mythological history.

### III. ETHNOBOTANICAL STUDIES

In the present study an intensive survey was made field survey was mad in Shervarayan Hills (Yercaud), Salem District, Tamil Nadu. The data were collected from traditional healers. An extensive field survey was conducted in Shervarayan Hills (Yercaud), to collect information about ethnomedicinal plants used by the tribals. The Data on the local names of the plants, medicinal use(s), part(s) used, other ingredients if any, added, mode of preparation and administration were collected. Collection of ethnobotanical plants, identification and preservation Representative samples of all medicinal species collected from the study area were preserved as herbarium as per standard methods (Jain and Rao, 1976, Rao and Sharma, 1990). Preliminary identification of the plant species was done with the help of regional floras (Hooker, 1885-1899; Gamble, 1915-1936; Mathew, 1983). The authentic identification and confirmation of names were done by comparing with type specimens deposited in the Botanical Survey of India, southern circle, Coimbatore.

### IV. RESULTS

The common medicinal plants were surveyed in the study area and the present study of 50 plants species at the included 45 genera and 33 families were recorded. The survey place in highly family 4 different types species Solanaceae , 3 different types species Euphorbiaceae, Acanthaceae, 2 different types species Fabaceae, Rutaceae, Capparidaceae, Asclepiadaceae, Caesalpinaceae, Asteraceae, Moraceae, Lamiaceae and the lowest plants family Malvaceae, Amaranthaceae, Xanthorrhoeaceae, Meliaceae, Annonaceae, etc I selected one such medicinal plant species *Cassia tora* Linn in my research area. The morphological characters of various parts of selected in plant was studied from freshly collected plant with the help of binocular dissection microscope.

### V. DISCUSSION

The tribal people preferred to use a diversity of native plant with medicinal utility. During the study a total of 50 species distributed among 45 genera belonging to 33 families used in the treatment of cracks and wounds were identified and the plants have been collected in their flowering and fruiting stages as far as possible from the natural habitat. As far as plant part utility is concerned,

leaves are used commonly, followed by stem bark and seeds. The present study plants that the local people always prefer the medicine of curing asthma, skin disease, headache, wound healing, cough, cancer, fever, cold, rheumatism, hepatitis, diarrhea, paralysis, dyspepsia, ulcers, dysentery, tumors, some viral infections and scorpion bite. The different parts of the same plant are used to make better acceptability of herbal remedies that are taken orally.

### VI. CONCLUSION

This study depicts that traditional knowledge and folk information form the basis for the treatment of various diseases among the tribals so they called Malayalis. From the interview conducted with the tribal informants it is clear that Malayali tribal posses innate ability to discern the character of plants and exploit the plant resources to meet their healthcare needs. The most important aspect of the Malayali tribal medicine is the fresh plant material used for the preparation of medicines. Still this old age practice forms the basic aspect of their life style and rituals. Alternatively if the fresh plants are not available dried plant materials are used. For this reason general plants serve as alternative remedy to cure a single disease. Present study focuses on the medicinal plants which continue to play a major role in healthcare needs of Malayali community and it will lead to further ethnobotanical research.

### VII. ENUMERATION OF ETHNOMEDICINAL PLANTS

The ethnomedicinal plant species are arranged in the alphabetical order. Each plant is followed by its family, vernacular name (Tamil) and common name. The medicinal uses are described with details such as the part(s) used singly, in combination of other plants, methods of preparation and mode of administration. The following is the list of 50 plants species studied;

1. *Abutilon indicum* L. (**Malvaceae**). **Habit:** Herb, **Vernacular name:** Thuthi.  
**Common names:** Crab's eye, Bead tree.  
Roots are mingled with leaves, the mixture is added with little amount of water. The obtained mixture is boiled and the decoction is given internally as diuretic and purgative. A hand full of leaves ground with 5ml of water and the obtained paste is used to treat toothache.
2. *Acacia leucophloea* Willd. (**Fabaceae**). **Habit:** Tree, **Vernacular name:** Vel – Velam. **Common names:** White Acacia, Panicked Acacia,  
Leaves are ground with water and the obtained juice is given orally to treat fever and stomachache. Leaves are boiled with 50 ml of

- water and the obtained juice is mixed with 30 ml of cow milk and administered to treat bleeding piles.
3. *Acalypha indica* L. (**Euphorbiaceae**). **Habit:** Herb, **Vernacular name:** Kuppaimeni. **Common name:** Indian Acalypha.  
The whole plant parts are dried in shade and ground without water. The obtained paste is used to brush regularly against toothache. The leaf is ground with water to make a paste and is applied externally to treat bed-sores.
  4. *Achyranthes aspera* L. (**Amaranthaceae**). **Habit:** Herb, **Vernacular name:** Nayuruvi. **Common names:** Cadillo, Chichoborugo.  
Leaves decoction taken orally in stomach problems, diuretic, piles and skin diseases.
  5. *Acorus calamus* L. (**Aroideae**). **Habit:** Herb, **Vernacular name:** Vashambu. **Common names:** Calamus, Rat root.  
Decoction of the rhizome is taken internally to treat dyspepsia, asthma and diarrhoea.
  6. *Adathoda vasica* Nees (**Acanthaceae**). **Habit:** Shrub, **Vernacular name:** Adathoda. **Common name:** Adusa.  
The decoction of the leaves is given internally to treat asthma, dysentery and diarrhoea.
  7. *Aegle marmelos* L. (**Rutaceae**). **Habit:** Tree, **Vernacular name:** Vilvam. **Common name:** Bael  
Decoction of the fruit is given orally to treat dysentery and dyspepsia. Decoction of the stem and root powder is given orally to cure fever.
  8. *Aloe vera* (L) Burm.f. (**Xanthorrhoeaceae**). **Habit:** Shrub, **Vernacular name:** Chotthukathazhai, **Common name:** Common Indian Aloe.  
The juice of the whole plant is given orally to treat jaundice, fever, rheumatism and piles.
  9. *Andrographis echinoides* Nees. (**Acanthaceae**). **Habit:** Herb, **Vern. name:** Gopuramthangi. **Common name:** False Water willow.  
Leaves juice is antipyretic, anthelmintic and cure stomach problems.
  10. *Andrographis paniculata* Nees. (**Acanthaceae**). **Habit:** Herb, **Vern. name:** Nilavembu. **Common name:** Green chirayta.  
Decoction of the leaves administered against dyspepsia, anthelmintic and stomachache.  
Decoction of the root is given as tonic to cure fever.
  11. *Anisomeles indica* O.Kze. (**Lamiaceae**). **Habit:** Herb, **Vernacular name:** Peyi-mirati. **Common name:** Indian catmint.  
Leaves juice is given orally to treat to fever and dyspepsia. The leaves paste is applied over biting parts to cure snake bites and scorpion stings.
  12. *Anisomeles malabarica* R.Br. (**Lamiaceae**). **Habit:** Shrub, **Vern. name:** Irattai peymiratti, **Common name:** Malabar catmint.  
Leaves juice is given orally to treat fever and stomach ache. The leaves juice is given internally to cure scorpion sting and snake bite.
  13. *Annona squamosa* L. (**Annonaceae**). **Habit:** Shrub, **Vernacular name:** Ram-sitapalam. **Common name:** Custard Apple.  
Decoction of the bark is astringent. Fruit juice is given orally as a vermifuge.
  14. *Argemone mexicana* L. (**Papaveraceae**). **Habit:** Herb, **Vernacular name:** Pirammathandu. **Common names:** Prickly poppy,  
The leaves decoction is given orally to treat ulcers and malarial fever. Seeds are useful in dropsy, jaundice, and leprosy. Latex is applied over scorpion sting.
  15. *Aristolochia bracteata* Retz. (**Aristolochiaceae**). **Habit:** Shrub, **Ver. name:** Aaduthinnapalai. **Common name:** Bracteated birthwort.  
Decoction of the whole plant mixed with castor oil is taken orally to cure fever. Leaves paste is applied externally to cure skin diseases and snake bite.
  16. *Aristolochia indica* L. (**Aristolochiaceae**). **Habit:** climber **Vern.name:** Perumarindu. **Common name:** The Indian birthwort.  
Decoction of the whole plant mixed with honey is administered against leprosy. Root paste is applied externally on snake bite and scorpion sting.
  17. *Azadirachta indica* A.Juss. (**Meliaceae**). **Habit:** Tree, **Vernacular name:** Vembu. **Common names:** Neem tree, Nim, Margosa Tree.  
Decoction of the bark is given orally to treat liver ailments.
  18. *Bougainvillea spectabilis* Willd. (**Nyctaginaceae**). **Habit:** Shrub, **Ve. name:** Kaaghithapoo. **Common name:** Brazilian hogweed.  
Leaves juice is given orally to treat jaundice, dysentery and diarrhoea. Roots juice is given to treat cough and fever.
  19. *Cadaba indica* Lam. (**Capparidaceae**). **Habit:** Shrub, **Vernacular name:** Viluthi. **Common name:** Dabi.

- The mixture of leaves and flowers ground with 50ml castor oil and turmeric to treat menorrhagia, and syphilis.
20. *Calophyllum inophyllum* L. (**Clusiaceae**). **Habit:** Tree, **Vernacular name:** Punnai, **Common name:** Alexandrian laurel  
Ten to fifteen gram of leaves is made into paste with a few drops of hot water to apply externally on rheumatism and gonorrhoea. Fresh and clean bark juice is used as drops on eyes to cure eye infections.
21. *Calotropis gigantea* (L) R.Br. (**Asclepiadaceae**). **Habit:** Shrub, **Vern. name:** Erukku. **Common name:** Crown flower  
The plant powder mixed with cow milk is used to treat leprosy, syphilis, ulcer, dysentery, diarrhoea and rheumatism. Decoction of the flowers is given orally to treat cough and asthma.
22. *Calotropis procera* L. (**Asclepiadaceae**). **Habit:** Shrub, **Vernacular name:** Vellerukku. **Common names:** Giant Swallow wort, Milkweed.  
Roots in the form of paste is applied against toothache. The flowers powder with black pepper is take internally to treat snake bite and cholera.
23. *Cardiospermum halicacabum* L. (**Sapindaceae**). **Habit:** Herb, **Vernacular name:** Mudakkaruthaan **Common names:** Balloon Vine, Heart-seed.  
The whole plant powder mixed with goat milk is taken internally to cure snake bite. The plant paste is applied on swellings and rheumatic pains.
24. *Cassia auriculata* L. (**Caesalpiniaceae**). **Habit:** Shrub, **Vernacular name:** Avarai. **Common names:** Aadari, Simbi.  
Juice of seeds is given orally for 4 days to treat diabetes and chylous urine. Leaves juice is given orally to treat heart discomforts.
25. *Centella asiatica* Urban. (**Apiaceae**). **Habit:** Herb, **Vernacular name:** Vallarai. **Common names:** Gotu kola, hydrocotyle, Indian pennywort, Brahmi, Manduukaparani.  
Leaves juice is given orally to improve memory power.
26. *Citrus medica* L. (**Rutaceae**). **Habit:** Tree, **Vernacular name:** Narathankaai. **Common name:** Citron.  
Leaves juice is used against fever and dyspepsia.
27. *Cleome viscosa* L. (**Capparidaceae**). **Habit:** Herb, **Vernacular name:** Nayi-velai. **Common name:** Yellow mesambay.  
Seed paste is taken orally with hot water to treat liver problems.
28. *Crotalaria verrucosa* L. (**Fabaceae**). **Habit:** Herb, **Vernacular name:** Narimiratti. **Common names:** Blue Rattlepod, Purple popbush, Shack-shack, Tooth-leaves rattlepod.  
Flowers are ground with cow milk and given to treat scabies. Fruits juice is given orally to treat dysentery and diarrhoea.
29. *Datura metal* L. (**Solanaceae**). **Habit:** Herb, **Vernacular name:** Umathai. **Common names:** Thorn Apple, Angel's Trumpet, Hindu Datura, Horn of Plenty.  
Juice of leaves is given orally to treat spasm, asthma and chronic ulcer.
30. *Eclipta alba* Hassk. (**Asteraceae**). **Habit:** Herb, **Vernacular name:** Karishalanganni. **Common name:** Eclipta.  
Decoction of leaves is used as tonic against jaundice and skin diseases.
31. *Ervatamia coronaria* Steapf. (**Apocynaceae**). **Habit:** Shrub, **Ve. name:** Nandhiyavatai. **Common name:** Crepe jasmine.  
Two grams of leaves powder with honey is used to cure rheumatism, dysentery, dyspepsia and diarrhoea.
32. *Euphorbia hirta* L. (**Euphorbiaceae**). **Habit:** Herb, **Ver. name:** Amman-pacharisi. **Common names:** Asthma plant, garden spurge.  
Crushed leaves with goat milk are given orally to treat dysentery, diarrhoea and asthma.
33. *Ficus benghalensis* L. (**Moraceae**). **Habit:** Tree, **Vernacular name:** Alamaram. **Common name:** Banyan Tree.  
Latex is applied on sores, ulcers and rheumatism. Decoction of the bark and seeds cure gonorrhoea and dysentery.
34. *Ficus religiosa* L. (**Moraceae**). **Habit:** Tree, **Vernacular name:** Arashamaram **Common names:** Bo-tree, Pipal, Asvattha.  
Leaves paste is applied in skin diseases. The dried bark powder mixed with honey is used as an aphrodisiac.
35. *Gloriosa superba* L. (**Lilliaceae**). **Habit:** Climber **Vern. name:** Kalappai Kilangu. **Common names:** Flame lily, glory lily, climbing lily, creeping lily.  
Decoction of the tuber is an aphrodisiac. Tubers juice with goat milk is taken orally to treat leprosy, gonorrhoea and piles.
36. *Ixora coccinia* L. (**Rubiaceae**). **Habit:** Shrub, **Vernacular Name:** Vitchie.

- Common names:** Jungle Geranium, Flame of the Woods, Jungle Flame.  
The flowers and root juice is given to cure diarrhoea, fever and dysentery.
37. *Leucas aspera* Spreng. (Lamiaceae). **Habit:** Herb, **Vernacular name:** Thumbai.  
**Common name:** Leucas.  
The leaves juice is given orally to treat scabies. The root juice with goat milk is given three times a day for four days to cure poisonous bites.
38. *Melia azedarach* L. (Meliaceae). **Habit:** Tree, **Vernacular name:** Mallyay vembu.  
**Common names:** Chinaberry tree, Persian lilac, Pride of India, Bead tree.  
The flowers powdered with cow milk is used to cure headache. The leaves paste is applied externally to cure leprosy, skin diseases and nervous disorders.
39. *Mimusops elengi* L. (Sapotaceae). **Habit:** Tree, **Vernacular name:** Maghizham.  
**Common name:** Spanish cherry.  
The decoction of bark, fruit and seeds are used as tonic in fever, diarrhoea and headache.
40. *Ocimum sanctum* L. (Lamiaceae). **Habit:** Herb, **Vernacular name:** Tulasi.  
**Common name:** Holy Basil, Tusli, Tulasi, Madura-tala.  
The juice of the leaves is given orally to treat fever, leprosy and cough.
41. *Opuntia dillenii* Haw. (Cactaceae). **Habit:** Shrub, **Vernacular name:** Sappathi kalli.  
**Common name:** Figueira-da-índia.  
The fruits are used in gonorrhoea. The fruits paste is applied on snake bite and dog bite.
42. *Phyllanthus amarus* L. (Euphorbiaceae). **Habit:** Herbs, **Vern. name:** Kizha nelli.  
**Common names:** Gale-o-Wind, Hurricane weed.  
Decoction of the whole plant with sugar is given for jaundice and liver complaints.
43. *Santalum album* L. (Santalaceae). **Habit:** Tree, **Vernacular name:** Sandhanam.  
**Common name:** Sandalwood  
Decoction of the bark is sedative and diuretic. Leaves extract with cow milk is taken orally three times a day for four days against gonorrhoea.
44. *Senna tora* (L.) Roxb (Caesalpinaceae) **Habit:** Tree., **Vern. name:** Oosi thagarai  
**Common name:** Oosi thagarai  
The plants part used the fever, cold, rheumatism, hepatitis, diarrhea, paralysis, dyspepsia, ulcers, dysentery, tumors, some viral infections and scorpion bite.
45. *Solanum nigrum* L. (Solanaceae). **Habit:** Herb, **Vernacular name:** Manathakkali.  
**Common names:** Black nightshade; wonder berry.  
The leaves and flowers juice with salt and black pepper is given orally to treat skin diseases, piles and ulcer.
46. *Solanum virginianum* L. (Solanaceae). **Habit:** Shrub, **Vern name:** Kandan-katteri.  
**Common names:** Yellow-Berried Nightshade.  
Fruits paste with cow milk is taken twice daily for seven days to cure toothache.  
The leaves are burnt and the ash is mixed with hot water and given to treat dyspepsia and constipation.
47. *Solanum trilobatum* L. (Solanaceae). **Habit:** Shrub, **Vernacular name:** Thudhuvalai.  
**Common name:** Achuda.  
Juice extracted from leaves is given orally to treat asthma and lung diseases.
48. *Syzygium cumini* L. (Myrtaceae). **Habit:** Tree, **Vernacular name:** Naval.  
**Common names:** Java plum, Jamun.  
The seeds decoction is given orally to treat diabetes.
49. *Vernonia cinerea* (L.) Less. (Asteraceae). **Habit:** Herb,  
**Vern. name:** Mukuthipoondu. **Common name:** French bouton violet.  
The whole plant is used as anthelmintic, alterative and against skin diseases.
50. *Vetiveria zizanioides* Nash. (Poaceae). **Habit:** Shrub, **Vernacular name:** Vettiver.  
**Common names:** Khas-khas grass, vetiver, lacate violeta.  
Decoction of the rhizome is taken to treat blood pressure and stomach problems.

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