

Ethnomedicinal plants used by the tribals of Vizianagaram district, Andhra Pradesh

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ABSTRACT

The tribal people have been using specific medicinal plants to cure specific ailments over centuries. Ethnomedicinal studies are often significant in revealing locally important plant species especially for the discovery of crude drugs. A large number of wild and cultivated plants are being used for the treatment of various ailments by these communities with the knowledge of medicinal plants. Vizianagaram is a newly formed North coastal district of Andhra Pradesh, which lies geographically between 17° 15' and 19° 15' of the Northern latitude and 83° 00' to 83° 45' of the Eastern longitude. The main tribal inhabitants of this district consist of Konda dora, Manne dora, Jatapu, Savara, Yerukula, Goudus and Mukadoras. The plants growing around them form an integral part of their culture. These and their medicine men and women have valuable information about properties and medicinal uses of plants. In this paper an attempt has been made to document 42 plant species belonging to 42 genera and 27 families being used traditionally by the tribals of Vizianagaram district.

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Key words : Ethnomedicinal Plants, Tribals, Vizianagaram, Andhra Pradesh

INTRODUCTION

Plant based medicines enjoy a respectable position today, especially in the developing countries. Indigenous remedies which are believed to be more effective, safe and inexpensive are gaining popularity among the people of both rural and urban areas. Information from ethnic groups or indigenous traditional medicine has played a vital role in the discovery of novel products from plants as chemotherapeutic agents (Katewa *et al.*, 2004). The system of folk medicine like that of modern system has its own way of diagnosis and treatment. Treatment is directly connected with the causation of disease. They are particularly interwoven with magic, religion and traditional

social values (Hughes, 1968). The present study carried out on the ethnomedicine of Vizianagaram district is one such attempt to document the traditional knowledge of medicinal plants used by the tribals of this region. Vizianagaram is a newly formed north coastal district of Andhra Pradesh which lies between 17° 15' and 19° 15' of the Northern latitude and 83° 00' to 83° 45' of the Eastern longitude. The main tribals of this district consist of Gadabas, Jatapus, Savaras, Konda doras, Manne doras, Yerukulas, Goudus and Mukha doras. Earlier ethnobotanical work was done by Hemadri *et al.* (1987), Hemadri and Venugopalachary (1998) and Venkaiah (1998).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Field surveys were conducted during 2007-2009 for systematic recording of ethnomedicinal practices of Vizianagaram district. Routine methods of plant collection and herbarium techniques have been followed (Jain and Rao, 1977). Ethnomedicinal usages of plants were gathered from the village chief, medicine men, local men and women using semi structured questionnaires. Local names, plant parts used and mode of administration were recorded. After documentation, the treatment pattern of various

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