

## PLANTS USED IN TRADITIONAL MEDICINE BY TRIBALS OF PRAKASAM DISTRICT, ANDHRA PRADESH

R. KRISHNA MOHAN AND P. V. BHIRAVA MURTHY

*Department of Botany, Defence Laboratories Junior College, Kanchanbagh,  
Hyderabad – 500 258, A. P., India*

---

**Received: 2 January, 1991**

**Accepted: 7 June, 1991**

---

**ABSTRACT:** *The paper deals with 37 selected species of plants which are used as medicine by tribals of the Prakasam District of Andhra Pradesh. Detailed uses of these plants as suggested by the tribals are mentioned. It is however, suggested to carry out chemical screening to identify the active principles in these plants before concluding anything on their uses.*

### INTRODUCTION

Prakasam District, one of the Southernmost districts of Andhra Pradesh lies between 1457' and 1617' N latitude and 73 o 43' and 80 o 25' E longitude, occupying an area about 17,626 Sq. km. The Nallamalais and the Veligondla are the two major hill ranges in the district, of which Veramkonda situated in the Eastern Nallamalais is the highest peak (939 m). The Nallamali hills which form a part of Eastern Ghats run through this district.

The vegetation of the district varies from the sea coast to hill ranges of the Nallamali as and the Veligondla due to the variation in altitude, soil types and climatic factors. The rock type mainly met with in this district is gneiss. The soil in the plains is red loam, black, cotton and sandy or mixed varieties. Brown and black soils occur mostly in the Nallamalai forest areas. Red loam soils are Predominate in the Veligondla hills. The coastal belt is sandy. The temperature ranges between 45°C and 21°C. The average rain fall in the district is 708.9 mm.

The vegetation of the district is broadly classified into four categories (i) Coastal Vegetation (ii) Vegetation of the Plains (iii) Thorny scrub vegetation (iv) Deciduous Vegetation (Dry and moist deciduous with evergreen elements).

No attempt was made earlier to study the medicinal plant wealth of this district. During the Survey of the flora of Prakasam district (1983 – 1986) in depth, the author could collect ample information about the medicinal plants.

Chenchus, Lambadi and Yerukulas are the tribes inhabiting the Nallamalai and Veligondla forest areas. Tribals of these forests utilize several plant medicinally in their day to day life. There is a wide scope for introduction and systematic cultivation of indigenous medicinal plants on a large scale in the hill and plain areas for the betterment of the economy of the people in the respective areas as well as the state. Furthermore, such a step for cultivation of

medicinal plants would not only give an impetus to pharmaceutical industry but also to the systems of medicine like Ayurveda, Unani and Homeopathy, which are best suited for a country like India with vast rural population.

The preliminary survey of medicinal plants of this district was undertaken to evaluate their availability, location and uses by the tribals. Thirty seven plants were collected and their uses were recorded in the field. The plants were identified on the basis of the authentic specimens in the Central National Herbarium, Calcutta and Botanical Survey of India, Southern Circle, Coimbatore. All the voucher specimens after identification were deposited in the department of Environmental Science, Andhra University, Waltair, and Herbarium of the Southern Circle, Botanical Survey of India, Coimbatore and one set at Central National Herbarium, Calcutta.

The following paper gives a first hand information on the occurrence, frequency, distribution and medicinal uses including the method of administration of medicinal plants. Detailed description are avoided as they are available in well known floras. The information gathered is purely based on the reports obtained from the informers of the area, (tribals and herbal doctor) Precaution was taken to confirm the information about the same plant from different informers.

### Detailed Enumeration

Plants are arranged alphabetically with the correct nomenclature, family name, local name (if available) locality, field numbers, frequency, distribution and at last a brief notation of uses. As the collector of all the specimens is R. Krishna Mohan, only correction number or numbers are

mentioned under each species, unless, otherwise specified.

1. *Achyranthes aspera* L. (Amaranthaceae).

Local name : Uttareni. Darsi, 313.

A common weed of wasterplaces along roadsides and lower hill slopes. Extract of leaves mixed with salt is given for stomach disorders.

2. *Alangium salvifolium* (L. F.) wang. (Alangiaceae).

Local name : Udugayerranilagundam RF, 769.

Common in Reserve forests of Nallamalaias and Veligondlas. The crushed root extract is used as a remedy to cure wounds and skin diseases.

3. *Andrographis paniculata* (Burm. f.) wall. Ex Nees (Acanthaceae).

Local name : Nelavemu. Moulta RF, 483.

Occasional in plains as well as in Nallamali forests. Water soaked leaves eaten raw used against Malaria and Leaf paste is administered internally to force out the placental remains of cattle after delivery.

4. *Argemone Mexicana* L (Papavaraceae) Oguru, 243.

A common weed in open waste places and fallow fields. (Paste of leaves in applied on forehead as a remedy against headache.

5. *Boerhaavia diffusa* L. (Nyctaginaceae). Mederametla, 196.

- Common in plains and interior of forests. Raw leaves are eaten for diarrhea and gastric troubles.
6. *Butea monosperma* (Lam.) Taub. (Fabaceae).
- Local Name : Moduga. Rollapenta RF, 744.
- Occasional in Nallamalai forests. A red astringent gum or risin got from stem is administered in the treatment of Jaundice and diarrhea.
7. *Bridaia cinerascens*, *Geiirm*. (Euphorbiaceae).
- Local Name : Iriki. Chinnauritlapenta RF, 422.
- Endemic plant to the Eastern Ghats, rare. Leaf juice mixed with cow's milk is given as laxative and also to cure stomach pain.
8. *Cassine glauca kuntze* (Celastraceae).
- Local Name : Nerdi, Thummalabailu RF, 763.
- Occasional in deciduous forests of Nallamalais. Root is said to use against snake bite.
9. *Centella asiatica* (L) Urb. (Apiaceae).
- Local Name : Saraswathibrahmi. Pedamantanala RF. 596.
- Occasional along streams in Nallamalai forests. Powdered dried leaves mixed with water are used as tonic for improving memory and correcting stammering.
10. *Cissmpelos pareira* L. Var *hirsute* (DC). Forman (Menispermaceae). Malakondapenta RF, 510.
- Commonly seen in forests. The juice obtained from crushing the leaves is mixed with black pepper and is given to cure jaundice.
11. *Citrullus colocynthis* (L.) Schrad. (Cucurbitaceae).
- Local Name : Chedupuccha and Verripucca. Mogalicherla RF, 254.
- Crushed roots and fruits are boiled with water and the decoction is given for drinking to cure jaundice and urinary diseases.
12. *Cryptolepis buchamani* Roem. & Schult. (Asclepiadiaceae).
- Local Name : Adavipalathiga. Rollapenta RF, 390.
- Occasionally seen in Nallamali Forests. The milky latex mixed with water is given to cure dysentery and hepatic troubles.
13. *Cleome chelidonii* L. F. (Cleomaceae). Cumbum, 656.
- A common weed of cultivated fields and wet places. Leaf paste of this plant is given to cure dysentery. Juice for fevers and also used to cure skin diseases.
14. *Costus speciosus* Sm. (Zingiberaceae).
- Local Name : Adavi Pasupu. Rollapenta RF, 950.

Occasional in Nallamalai forests. Underground part of the plant with rhizome is ground and applied to cure wounds.

15. *Datura metal* L. (Solanaceae).

Local Name : Vummetha. Pernamitta, 011.

Common in waste places, along roadsides and occasional in forests. Seeds are poisonous. Extract of leaves and roots is used against Asthama and dysentery.

16. *Entada rheedii* Sprang. (Fabaceae).

Local Name : Gurraputhiga. Rollapenta RF, 606 & 743.

Occasional in Nallamalaias. Powdered seeds mixed with water is given for puerperal fevers.

17. *Erythroxylum monogynum* Roxb. (Erythroxylaceae).

Local Name : Devadadari. Pedaaauritlapenta RF, 426.

Common in Veligondla and Nallamalai forests. Fruits are consumed to cure indigestion and paste of roots in warm water is used to cure cough and skin diseases.

18. *Euphorbia nivulia* Buch – Ham. (Euphorbiaceae).

Local Name : Akujemuda. Ongole, 933.

Occasional in Velegandla as well as Nallamalai forests. The milky latex is used as purgative and diuretic and

applied externally to heal wounds and ulcers.

19. *Gardenia resinifera* Roth. (Rubiaceae).

Local Name : Karenguva. Rangaswamy gundam RF, 815.

Common in Veligondla forests and occasional in Nallamalaias. The yellow resin mixed with water is used in constipation and also to cure purpheral fevers.

20. *Gloriosa superb* (L). (Liliaceae).

Local Name : Kandlakalaka and Nabhi. Malakonda RF, 264.

Frequently found in the scrubby jungles as well as Nallamalaias. Tubers are made into paste and applied on wounds.

21. *Glycosmis mauritiana* (Lamk.). Tanaka (Rutaceae).

Local Name : Butta Chettu. Chintala RF, 559.

Common in Nallamalai and Veligondla forests. Roots crushed and boiled with water and this decoction is given to children suffering from dysentery and root is used as an antidote for a snake bite.

22. *Helicteres isora* (Sterculiaceae).

Local Name : Gubathada. Nallaguntla RF, 635.

Common in Velegondla and Nallamalai forests. An infusion of the fruits in groundnut oil is used as gargle in throat pain and rubbed in skin diseases.

23. *Holarrhena pubescens* (Buch – Ham.)  
Wall .ex. Don (Apocynaceae).

Local Name : Palabarika, Rollapenta,  
Isakagundam RF, 388, 698. Quite  
common in forest areas. Powdered bark  
mixed with milk is given to cure  
dysentery. Milky latex is applied to heal  
wounds.

24. *Jatropha gladulifera* Roxb.  
(Euphorbiaceae).

Local Name :Dundapaku, Rudravaram,  
019.

Fairly common along roadsides and in  
waste places. The juice of the leaves is  
given to children to cure the ulcers of the  
mouth and latex is applied on cuts to  
stop bleeding.

25. *Jatropha heynei* Balakr.  
(Euphorbiaceae).  
Malakondapenta RF, 799.

Rarely found in the interiors of the  
Nallamalai forests. Latex is applied on  
burns. Paste of leaf applied on cuts  
causes by rocks, stones or iron pieces.

26. *Lannea coromandelica* (Houtt.) Merr.  
(Anacardiaceae).

Local Name : Gumpuni. Diguvameeta  
RF, 731.

Common in Nallamalai forests. The  
juice obtained from crushed leaves  
boiled with water and the decoction is  
given for drinking to prevent vomiting.

27. *Perugularia daemia* (Forssk.) Chiov.  
(Asclepiadaceae).

Local Name : Palathiga, Allur, 077.

Frequently seen in hedges, along  
roadsides and also among bushes in  
forests. Extract of leaf is given to cure  
dysentery and asthma and root-extract  
is used in curing guiddiness.

28. *Premna tomentosa* Willd.  
(Verbenaceae).

Common in Nallamalai forests. The leaf  
paste mixed with gingel oil is applied to  
cure wounds and skin diseases.

29. *Priva cordifolia* Druce (Verbenaceae)

Local Name : Magalingaku.  
Nallaguntla RF, 634.

Rare in Nallamalai forests. Leaf paste is  
used as antifertility drug and also to cure  
ulcers.

30. *Sarcostemma acidum* (Roxb.) Voigt.  
(Asclepiadaceae).

Local Name: Pullithiga and  
Sannajemuda. Pedamanthanala RF, 601.  
Common in scrub jungles and occasional  
over trees in Nallamalaias. Latex  
applied externally to cure wounds and  
burns.

31. *Strychnos nux-vomica* L (Loganiaceae).

Local Name : Musti. Chintala RF, 371.

Occasional in thorny scrub Jungles and  
Nallamalai forests. The seeds are highly  
poisonous. The juice obtained from the  
crushed leaves is used to cure dysentery  
and leaf paste is warmed and applied on  
boils and ulcers.

32. *Terminalia chebula* Retz.  
(Combretaceae).

Local Name : Karakkaya.  
Obulesunipenta RF, 695.

Occasional in Nallamalai forests. Fruit pulp is applied for cure wounds and gum ulcers.

33. *Toddalia asiatica* (L) (Rutaceae).  
Yerranilagundam RF, 565.

Occasional in Veligondla and Nallamalai forests. Root bark gives an yellow dye which is mixed with water to cure fevers and cough.

34. *Vitex negundo* L. (Verbenaceae).

Local Name : Vayala. Turumella RF, 530.

Frequently seen as a hedge plant in plains and occasional in forests. Leaf extract is used to cure ulcers and leaf extract with lime water is used as an anthelmintic.

35. *Withania somnifera* (L) Dunal (Solanaceae).

Local Name : Penneru. Pamidpadu, 233.

Rarely found in waste places and cultivated fields. Leaf juice is given in case of fevers and asthma and used in painful engorged files.

36. *Wrightia arborea* (Denn.) Mabb. (Apocynaceae).

Local Name : Thellapala and Palabiriki.  
Rollapenta RF, 867.

Occasionally found in Nallamalaias. Roots are used as antidote for snake bites. Root bark is used to cure diarrhea.

37. *Wrightia tinctoria* R. Br. (Apocynaceae).

Local Name : Pala. Pedaurithepenta RF, 434.

Common in plains as well as forests. The paste from the stem bark is mixed with garlic juice and applied on aching limbs and also given to cure puerperal fevers.

### Acknowledgement

We are thankful to the Director, Botanical Survey of India, Howrah for providing financial assistance and to the authorities of Regional Herbarium, Botanical Survey of India, Southern Circle, Coimbatore and Balatter Herbarium, Bombay for having permitted us to consult the library and herbarium. Thank are also due to the tribals of this district for giving information about their plant used and to the forest authorities of the Government of Andhra Pradesh.

### REFERENCES

1. Chopra, R. N.; Nayar. S. L. & Chopra I. C. ; Glossary of Indian Medicinal Plants, CSIR, New Delhi (1956).
2. Kirtikar, K. R., Basu, B. D., Indian Medicinal Plants, Vols. 1 – 4, Jayed Press, Delhi (1975).
3. Anon, The Wealth of India – Raw materials (11 vols), CSIR, New Delhi, (1948 – 76).

4. Gamble, J. S., Flora of the Presidency of Madras, Vols. 1 – 3, Botanical Survey of India, Calcutta, (1967).
5. Hemadri, K. Raj, P. V. Rao, S. S & Sarma C. R. R; Folklore claims from Andhra Pradesh – 1, Jour. Sci. Res. Pl. Med., 1 : 37 – 49 (1980).
6. Jain, S. K., Banerjee, D. K., & Pal, D. C.; Medicinal plants among certain Adibasis in India, Bull. Bot. Surv. India, 15: 85 – 91 (1973).