

MEDICINAL PLANTS IN WOMAN FOLK HEALTH CARE**Dr P. Saritha,¹ A Surekha,² Dr C Aruna.³**

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Corresponding author: sarithapendlikatla@gmail.com**Abstract :**

A total 68 plant species of 35 families useful in women folk's health care were recorded along with their family, part of the plant used, its ailment and mode of administration. These documented plants are effective remedies for leucorrhoea, gonorrhoea, menorrhagia, cardiovascular diseases, breast cancer, excessive stomach pain, urinary disorders, dysuria, inflammation of skin, fertility, disorders during delivery, pregnancy and hair-care treatment in women. The documented herbal recipes may provide ample opportunities to study them for their efficacy and also for novel drug development.

Keywords: Women folk's, Traditional medicine, Health care.

Introduction:

In general it is accepted that the health status in India is poor. Lack of knowledge, primitive and conservation outlook poor communication, poverty and government apathy are some of the factors held responsible for this. Currently, the herbal medicines are getting a boost also through the sponsorship of multinational pharmaceutical companies. The Rigveda and Atharva-Veda (3700 - 1800 BC) mentioned the properties of medicinal plants. Information about herbs has been recorded in Charaka Samhita and Shusruta Samhita – the most important books on Ayurvedic system of medicine (Narasimha Rao). Approximately 3000 species are known to have medicinal properties in India (Prakasha et al., 2010). It is estimated that 40% of the world populations depends directly on plant based medicine for their health care (WHO, Geneva, 2003). In India, medicinal plants offer low cost and safe health care solutions (Mohd. Mazid, 2012). In the recent years, traditional medicines are being supported by many so as to be able to combine it with modern medicine (Neuman and Lauro, 1982; Reddy, 1986). It is noticed that traditional medicine yet persists very strongly even in urban areas and in countries like USA. Akerle (1983) stated, in urban USA, dominated by scientific medicine, we know the folk medicine is strong and traces of primitive medicine are still to be found. As per the directions of World Health Organisation Health Assembly (1977), the forest Department has been running a field programme over medicinal plants since 1991. This programme is fully supported by the Central government of India and Department of Horticulture has shown interest in cultivating medicinal plants. Women are integral to all aspects of society. Women bear the burden of responsibility associated with being wives, mothers and carers of others. Increasingly, women are becoming an essential part of the labour force and in onequarter to one-third of households they are the prime source of income (WHO, 1995). When women's health issues have been addressed in these populations, activities have tended to focus on issues associated with reproduction – such as family planning and child-bearing – while women's mental health has been relatively neglected (WHO, 1993; WHO, 1995). However, the conception of women's mental health has been limited as have attempts to protect and promote it. Failure to address women's health and mental problems has damaging social and economic consequences for communities (WHO, 1993; WHO, 1995) Prevalence rates of depression and anxiety disorders as well as psychological distress are higher for women than men. Data from the World Bank study revealed that depressive disorders accounted for close to 30% of the disability from neuropsychiatric disorders amongst women in developing countries but only 12.6% of that among men. The disparity in rates between men and women tend to be even more pronounced in underserved populations (World Bank, 1993). The present study is an innovative attempt that embodies the role of rural women in the practice of herbal medicines against the various diseases.

Materials and methods:

The data presented in this paper are the outcome of intensive studies conducted between years 2016-2020 from the traditional medicine practitioners. The data on the ethno herbal medicines along with their applications are collected from experienced and knowledgeable herbal men and women. Information on plants used in women folk care was gathered by quantitative and qualitative elicitation methods (Martin, 1995; Jain, 1989). The name of the plants are arranged alphabetically with giving information on vernacular names, family, concern official organ, its ailment and mode of administration has been documented. Earlier investigations on ethno medicinal plants for women folk's health care have been carried out in India and abroad (Tarafder, 1983a, 1983b, 1984; Siddique et al., 1988; Lakshmanan and Sankara Narayanan, 1990; Foster, 1994; Balik et al., 2000; Pullaiah, 2000)

Results & Discussion:

Indians have one of the world's richest medicinal plants heritage. The knowledge of these plants is undocumented and transmitted through an oral tradition. People throughout the world use medicinal plants and have a great faith on them for their effectiveness due to their inherit medicinal properties. Most of the women are more conscious about their ailments and have got a better knowledge on medicinal herbs than men. Even today they prefer traditional remedial practices for women folk's health care. The analysis of present communication reveals 68 medicinal plants belonging to 35 families with remedies for various diseases such as leucorrhoea, gonorrhoea, menorrhagia, cardio vascular diseases, breast cancer, excessive stomachpain, urinary disorders, dysuria, inflammation of skin, fertility, disorders during delivery, pregnancy and hair-care treatment in women (Table 1). This information provides clues to lead further research. The above mentioned medicinal plants in this study needed extensive scientific research work to exploit full potential as herbal drugs. The modern philosophy of treatment with herbal drugs is used extensively with proper research for the betterment of mankind

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Table 1: List of Plants used in woman folk health care.

S.No	Plant name	Family	Part used	Ailment	Mode of administration
1	Abelmoschus esculentus	Malvaceae	Seedless fruit	Leucorrhoea	Orally with sugar.
2	Abelmoschus moschatus	Malvaceae	seeds	As antiseptic after delivery	Powder taken.
3.	Abrus precatorius	Fabaceae	Roots	As antiseptic after delivery	Powder taken.
4.	Abutilon indicum	Malvaceae	Leaves	As emmenagogue	
5.	Acacianiloticas.sp.indica	Mimosaceae	Pods	Leucorrhoea	Paste taken orally with milk.
6.	Acalypha indica	Euphorbiaceae	Leaves	To check excessive stomach pain	Powder taken orally
7.	Achyranthus aspera	Amaranthaceae	Whole plant	Checks excessive bleeding during delivery.	Extract taken orally
8.	Adenanthera pavonina	Mimosaceae	Seeds; Bark	Cardiovascular diseases during pregnancy; Bark was used to wash hair.	Taken orally; Paste applied externally.
9.	Aegle marmelos	Rutaceae	Leaves	Leucorrhoea	Paste taken orally with milk.
10.	Amaranthus spinosus	Amaranthaceae	Roots	Dysuria & inflammation of skin.	Decoction taken orally twice daily.
10.	Artemisia nilagirica	Asteraceae	Leaves	Hair-care treatment	External application.
11.	Aloe vera	Malvaceae	Roots	To treat gonorrhea	-
12.	Alternanthera sessilis	Amaranthaceae	Roots; Whole plant	To treat menorrhagia; as emmenagogue	-
13.	Apamasilliquosa	Aristolachiaceae	Roots	To treat anemia during pregnancy	-
14.	Asparagus racemosus	Liliaceae	Roots	Galactagogus & for Leucorrhoea	Juice taken orally; powder taken orally with ghee.
15.	Butea monosperma	Fabaceae	Bark	Protrusion of uterus	Decoction taken orally
16.	Breynia retusa	Euphorbiaceae	Leaves	As emmenagogue	
17.	Caesalpinia pulcherrima	Caesalpiniaceae	wood	As emmenagogue	Decoction taken orally
18.	Cajanus cajan	Fabaceae	Fruit	Galactagogus	Powder taken Orally
19.	Calotropis gigantea	Asclepidaceae	Leaves	To cure malnutrition during pregnancy	-

20.	Carica papaya	Caricaceae	Root bark	Galactagogus	Powder taken orally
21.	Cissampelos pareira	Menispermaceae	Shoot	To reduce labour pain	Decoction taken orally
22.	Clerodendrum viscosum	Verbinaceae	Leaves; Roots	To treat menorrhagia; to treat stomachache during pregnancy	-
23.	Corchorus aestuans	Tiliaceae	Roots	Juice is mixed with a Sida rhombifolia root for pre-delivery trouble.	Taken orally once per day.
24.	Cymbopogon citrates	Poaceae	whole plant	It relieves pain due to inflammation or spasm in uterus	-
25.	Curcuma aromatica	Zingiberaceae	Rhizome	For skin care due to its anti-bacterial properties.	External applications
26.	Cynodon dactylon	Poaceae	Whole plant	As emmenagogue	-
27.	Cythula prostrata	Acanthaceae	Leaves; Stem	To cure urinary disorders; to cure leucorrhoea	-
28.	Datura stramonium	Solanaceae	Fruit	To treat dandruff and hair falling	Juice applied externally.
29.	Desmodium gangeticum	Fabaceae	Roots;	To cure post-natal care; with Aloe vera leaf paste prevents the hairfall.	External application
30.	Euphorbia hirta	Euphorbiaceae	Whole plant	Leucorrhoea	Decoction taken orally
31.	Evolvulus alsinoides	Convolvulaceae	Whole plant	Leucorrhoea; with oil to promote the growth of hair.	Paste taken orally
32.	Gymnema sylvestre	Asclepiadaceae	Leaves	for securing conception and to activate uterus	decoction taken orally
33.	Hibiscus rosasinensis	Malvaceae	Leaves	To cure leucorrhoea	-
34.	Jasminum sambac	Oleaceae	Flowers with leaves.	To prevent breast cancer uterine bleeding; Promotes male & female reproductive system and stimulates the secretion of hormones.	Orally
35.	Justicia adhatoda	Acanthaceae		Facilitates the expulsion of-	-

				foetus.	
36.	Kalanchoe pinnata	Crassulaceae	Leaves	Less pains & dropping the placenta of new born baby; to cure malnutrition during pregnancy.	External application
37.	Lawsonia inermis	Lythraceae	Leaves	Growth and dye in grey hair, dandruff; to cure anemia during pregnancy	External application
38.	Mentha arvensis	Lamiaceae	Leaves	For obstinate vomiting & to cure anemia during pregnancy	Orally
39.	Mirabilis jalapa,	Nyctaginaceae	Tuber	To cure leucorrhoea and induce fertility	-
40.	Musa superba	Musaceae	Seeds	To cure excessive stomach pain	-
41.	Ocimum sanctum	Lamiaceae	Seeds	Asemenagogue	Orally
42.	Phragmites karka	Poaceae	Tuber	To cure urinary disorders	
43.	Phyllanthus emblica	Euphorbiaceae	Fruits	Leucorrhoea	Taken orally with honey
44.	Phyllanthus fraternus	Euphorbiaceae	Whole plant Roots-	asemenagogue; To cure urinary disorders	
45.	Piper longum	Piperaceae	Root, Fruit	To induce the expulsion of the placenta; For recovery of relaxed organs and to clean the uterus and sprue	Powder taken orally.
46.	Plumbago zeylanica	Plumbaginaceae	Root	Protrusion of uterus	Paste taken orally
47.	Potentilla chinensis	Rosaceae	Whole plant	Womens tonic	Taken orally
48.	Prosopis cineraria	Mimosoideae	Flowers	To prevent miscarriage.	Eaten with sugar.
49.	Prunus virginiana	Rosaceae	Bark	To ease the child birth	With warm infusion
50.	Punica granatum	Lythraceae	Fruit	toxaemia of pregnancy	A spoonful of juice mixed with equal quantity of honey
51.	Putranjiva roxburghii	Euphorbiaceae	Seeds	To cure leucorrhoea	
52.	Raphanus sativus	Brassicaceae	Root	To cure leucorrhoea	Taken orally
53.	Securinegaleucopyrus	Euphorbiaceae	Seeds	To cure leucorrhoea	-
54.	Sida rhombifolia	Malvaceae	Leaves	To cure malnutrition during	-

				pregnancy	
55.	Solanum melongena	Solanaceae	Flower	Removal of placenta	Paste taken orally
56.	Solanum nigrum	Solanaceae	Whole plant	To cure menorrhagia and piles	
57.	Stellaria media	Caryophyllaceae	Whole plant	As galactogogue & for blood purification af	Taken orally
58.	Sterculia urens	Sterculiaceae	Gum	Leucorrhoea	Paste taken orally
59.	Sauropus androgynus	Euphorbiaceae	Leaves	To recover the womb	Taken orally
60.	Trapa natans	Trapaceae	Fruit	leucorrhoea	Powder taken orally with sugar.
61.	Tabernaemontana divaricata	Apocynaceae	Roots	as an antiseptic after delivery	-
62.	Tinospora cordifolia	Menispermaceae	Stem without bark	to treat fever during pregnancy	Taken orally
63.	Trigonella foenum-graecum	Fabaceae	Seeds	It cures dandruff, lengthens hair and prevents from hairfall, baldness.	Paste applied externally
64.	Vetiveria zizanioides	Poaceae	Roots	To treat typhoid during pregnancy	Taken orally
65.	Vigna mungo	Fabaceae	Seed	Leucorrhoea	Powder taken orally
66.	Vitex negundo	Lamiaceae	Leaves	diarrhoea, asthma, hair growth and relieve post-partumpains.	Vapours for bath.
67.	Zingiber officinale	Zingiberaceae	Rhizome	To reduce labour pains	Powder taken orally with warm milk