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## ETHNOMEDICINAL PLANT DIVERSITY OF MALASAR TRIBE, KERALA INDIA

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### Abstract

A preliminary analysis reveals 52 medicinal plants used by the Malasar Ethnic community which includes ten trees, twenty-two shrubs, nine herbs and eight climbers and one creeper and grass. The study also documents the scientific names, ethnic use and knowledge pertaining to medicinal.

**Keywords:** Malasar tribe, Medicinal plants.

### Introduction

India is known for its medicinal plant diversity, its use in Ayurvedic and traditional medicines and also as a land of indigenous culture. About 28% of the indigenous people are found in India and are classified as Scheduled Tribes, of which Kerala account for 36 different ethnic communities. The Kerala part of Western Ghats, one of the Biodiversity hot spot of the world known as Malabar was historically epic centres of spices and medicinal plants trade even before 1000 BCE. The ethnic communities in Kerala are still a source medicinal plants to the Ayurveda drug industry especially from the Moist and Dry deciduous forest areas of the Western Ghats in the Central Kerala. The present study documents medicinal plants used by the Malasar Community distributed in the Nelliampathy and Nenmara regions of the Palakkad Districts comes within the foothills of the Nelliampathy hills within the Palakkad Gap. Quite a number of tribal communities thrive in nook and corner of the state of Kerala, Malasar tribes is one of the important amongst them. These Malasar tribes used to reside in small villages bordering the forest areas on the mountains of the districts including Anamalai, Palakkad and Darapuram. These Malasar tribes converse with each other in a language, which is a blend of the languages of Tamil and Malayalam. (Parambikulam Tiger Conservation Plan, 2011 – 2012 to 2020 – 2021)

### Study area

Palakkad district in the state of Kerala in India, 84m (276ft) from sea level. Total ten settlements inhabited in the Palakkad district such as Thekkady, Sungam, Kachithodu, Uravanppady, Kottayamkkad, Pullukkad, Kalliyampara, Chemmanampathi and Chulliyardam Malasar colony.

### Methodology

#### Sampling and sample location

The information was collected from the 10 settlements, as a total of 120 – 150 respondents were interviewed for the data collection during 2019 June to 2020 November period. From these settlements covering different gender, like Male, Female, Transgender, age, range between 12 – 18, 19 - 35, 35 – 50, 50 – above., and occupational categories are Forest dwellers like Traditional medicinal practitioners, Fisher (Fish expert), Forest labours, Plantation labours, Farmers, etc. And also, all information will be recorded in a MP3 recorder.

### Result and Discussion

Malasars aboriginal group inhabiting in the southern Western Ghats. They are one of the key informants of the traditional medicinal plants. There are many medicinal plants used by Malasar community, in regupathy et al., (2008) describe the knowledge of the medicinal plants used by Malasar tribe inhabiting in Vellaingiri holy hills and Kumar et al., (2006) describe the fifty one medicinal plant species. In this study document fifty-four medicinal plants.

**Table: 1. 0 Ethnomedicinal plant diversity**

Sl. No	Scientific Name	Family	Habit	Terminology of Malsar	Ethnic Knowledge
1	Abrus precatorius L.	Fabaceae	climber	Kunnikkuru	External use of grinded leaves used as a medicine for external swelling.

2	<i>Achyranthes aspera</i> L.	Amaranthaceae	Shrub	Oorankaya chedi	Mixture of grinded inflorescence, fruits and seeds of <i>Achyranthes aspera</i> L. And row honey used as a medicine for cough.
3	<i>Adathoda beddomei</i> C. B. Cl.	Acanthaceae	Shrub	Adalodakam	Paste of the root used for easy muscle contraction in vagina region during the givebirth.
4	<i>Aloe vera</i> (L.) Burm.f.	Asphodelaceae	herb	Kattarvazha	Pulp used for stomach pain during menstruation.
5	<i>Asparagus racemosus</i> Willd.	Asparagaceae	climber	shathavalli	Tuber used for white vaginal discharge and over bleedin during menstruation period in woman.
6	<i>Azadirachta indica</i> A.Juss., 1830	Meliaceae	Tree	Veppu	Grinded leaves of the plant and turmeric is the best meicine for itching
7	<i>Bambusa bambos</i> (L.) Voss	Poaceae	grass	Mulakoombu	shoot of bamboo used for abortion
8	<i>Boerhaviadiffusa</i> L. nom. Cons.	Nyctaginaceae	semi-erectshrub	Thamizhama	Whole plant used for swelling
9	<i>Capsicum frutescens</i>	Solanaceae	shrub	Kanthari	Used for the remedy to qure blood pressure
10	<i>Calotropis gigantea</i> (L.) W. T. Aiton	Apocynaceae	Shrub	Erukku	Lactex of <i>Calotropis gigantea</i> (L.) W. T. Aiton used for ringworm
11	<i>Cardiospermum halicacabum</i> L.	Sapindaceae	climber	Niravalli (Uzhinja)	For hair cleaning & hair growth
12	<i>Carica papaya</i> (L.)	Caricaceae	tree	Pappaya	
13	<i>Centella asiatica</i> (L.) Urban	Apiaceae	Creepers	Vallaralakri	External use of grinded leaves can cure skin diseases & Botch
14	<i>Chromolaena odorata</i> (L.) R.M.King & H.Rob.	Asteraceae	Shrub	Commnist pacha	The paste of grinded leaves with termeric is used for treat wound
15	<i>Cissampelospariera</i> L.	Menispermaceae	climber	Janamkolli	For colic, fever, cough.
16	<i>Clematis zeylanica</i> (L.) Poir	Ranunculaceae	Shrub	Vathakodi	Used for rhumatics

17	<i>Clitoria ternatea</i> L.	Fabaceae	climber	Shangupushpam	Used for bronchitis
18	<i>Coleus barbatus</i> (Andrews) Benth. ex G. Don	Lamiaceae	herb	Kanakoorka	Juice of leaves used for cough
19	<i>Curculigo orchioides</i> Gaertn., 1988	Hypoxidaceae	herb	Nilappana	Root stock used for Leukorrhea
20	<i>Cyanthillium cinereum</i> (Carl Linnaeus) H. Rob	Asteraceae	herb	Poovamkurunal	For urinary obstruction
21	<i>Datura metel</i> L.	Solanaceae	Shrub	Oomanthai	Fruit juice used for hair fall & dandruff
22	<i>Hemigraphis colorata</i> Blume.	Acanthaceae	Climber	Murukkooty	Healing wounds
23	<i>Desmodium gangeticum</i> (L.) DC.	Fabaceae	herb	Orala	Root used as a medicine for rheumatism
24	<i>Dipteracanthus prostratus</i> (Poir.) Nees	Acanthaceae	Shrub	Thuppalupadakkam	The paste of leaves and black paper is used to cure deep wound.
25	<i>Eclipta prostrata</i> L.	Astraceae	herb	Kanjunni	Used for Hair Growth and remedy for hair fall
26	<i>Euphorbia hirta</i> L.	Euphorbiaceae	herb	Murikootti	Used to cure wound
27	<i>Helicteres isora</i> L.	Malvaceae	Shrub	Valampiri Idampiri	Used to cure dysentery
28	<i>Hemidesmus indicus</i> (L.) R. Br.	Apocynaceae	semi-erect shrub	Nanari	Used to cure urinary disorders
29	<i>Leucas aspera</i> (Willd.) L.	Lamiaceae	herb	Thumba	An antipyretic for fever
30	<i>Mimosa pudica</i> L.	Mimosaceae	Shrub	thottavadi	Whole plant used for head ache
31	<i>Moringa oleifera</i> Lam.	Moringaceae	Tree	Muringa	Used to cooking purpose, it increases blood.
32	<i>Ocimum tenuiflorum</i> L.	Lamiaceae	Shrub	Thulasi	Leaves used for cough and cold.
33	<i>Pandanus foetidus</i> Roxb.	Pandanaceae	Shrub	Kaitha Uzhi	Used for rheumatic pain
34	<i>Peperomia wightiana</i> Miq.	piperaceae	herb	Vellathandu	Used for cold
35	<i>Phyllanthus emblica</i> L.	Phyllanthaceae	Tree	Nellika	Fruit used for hair growth.
36	<i>Piper longum</i> Miq.	piperaceae	climber	Thippali	Used for cough and cold.
37	<i>Piper nigrum</i> L.	piperaceae	climber	Kurumulaku	Dried fruit used as a medicine for cough, fever, Cold, etc..
38	<i>Pseudarthria viscida</i> (L.) Wight & Arn.	Fabaceae	Shrub	Mukala	root and whole plant is useful in cough and asthma
39	<i>Psidium guajava</i> L.	Myrtaceae	Tree	Koyyaakaaya	Leaves used for mouth cleaning

40	<i>Pterocarpus marsupium</i> Roxburgh	Fabaceae	Tree	Venka	Bark of the tree used for scurf in babies
41	<i>Ricinus communis</i> L.	Euphorbaceae	Shrub	Avanakku	Tender leaves used for jaundice
42	<i>Rotula aquatica</i> Lour.	Boraginaceae	Shrub	Kallurvanchi	
43	<i>Salacia reticulata</i> Wight	Celastraceae	Shrub	Eakanayakam	Used for the prevention and treatment of diabetes and skin diseases
44	<i>Sidarhombifolia</i> L.	malvaceae	Shrub	Kurunthotti	whole plant used for hair growth
45	<i>Solanum torvum</i> Sw.	Solanaceae	Shrub	Chundakka	The tender fruit used to cook purpose and it cure digestion problems.
46	<i>sphaeranthusindicus</i> L.	Asteraceae	Shrub	Kottakaranda	Root and flower used for septicaemia
47	<i>Terminalia arjuna</i> (DC.) Wight and Arn.	compertaceae	tree	Neermaruth	Bark of the tree used to heart disese.
48	<i>Terminalia bellirica</i>	compertaceae	tree	Thanni	The epicarp of fruit is used for cough
49	<i>Thespesia populnea</i> (L.) Sol. Ex Correa	Malvaceae	Tree	Poovarash	Bark of the tree used for scurf in babies
50	<i>Tinosporacordifolia</i> (Willd.) H. k. Thomson	Menispermaceae	climber	Chittamruth	juice of green vine with row honey is a remedy fever and coryza.
51	<i>Ziziphus glabrata</i> Heyne ex Roth	Rhamnaceae	tree	Kottamaram	Bark is used for wound healing
52	<i>Vitex negundo</i> L.	Lamiaceae	Shrub	Karinochi	Tender leaves used for teeth ache

### Summary and Conclusion

The Malasar ethnic community mostly live in the valley. The Malasar possess a rich traditional aboriginal knowledge of medicinal plants and that many aboriginals and mainstream people utilize medicinal plants of the Ayyasamy hills, situated in the Western Ghats between Tamil Nadu and Kerala state borders (Mubarak et al, 2010). In this study document total fifty-four medicinal plants and in which twenty and more shrubs were used as medicine, eight climbers, ten trees, nine herbs, one semi erected shrub and one grass. The community mostly depending on shrubby medicinal plants.

### Acknowledgment

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