

# Traditional Medicinal Plants Of The Tribal In Tripura, India

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## Abstract

In Tribal society of Tripura, India, majority of the populace followed traditional method of treatment. Traditional healing system is the oldest form of treatment that is based on underlying philosophy and a set of principles by which it is practiced. It is the medicine from which all the present forms of medicine are developed. Traditional healing practice was originally an integral part of semi-nomadic and agricultural tribal societies. Traditional healer can be defined as someone who is recognised by the community in which he lives as competent to provide health care by using vegetable, animal and mineral substances based on the social, cultural and religious background. Information on forty eight plant species from thirty families are presented here.

**Keywords:** Traditional medicine, traditional healer, treatment, tribal, Tripura, India.

## INTRODUCTION:

There is a common observation across the tribal culture that the ancestral spirits play an important role in the prosperity and protection of the family. There are many spirits who are feared because of their power to afflict people by bringing a number of diseases. The role of spirits, ghosts and deities in the tribal life in the causation and treatment of diseases is so important that the local tribal people have to seek the help of traditional healers for appeasing, controlling or driving away the disease control agent.

The tribal people of Unakoti district, Tripura, India, used traditional methods of treatment based on herbal drugs. Besides herbal medicines these tribes also use animal parts as medicines. However, information about drugs from the animal kingdom has not been documented, since several animal species have been declared as endangered protected species. Since the advent of modern medicine the traditional medicine has lost its importance and many practitioners have died, collecting information is a big challenge. The present study has been carried out to document these herbal drugs from field survey conducted from 2021 to 2022.

## Study area:

The present study mainly concentrates in the district of Unakoti, Tripura, India, where there are different tribal communities like Tripuri, Halam, Kuki and Chakma. We could find out only eight practitioners who are active as of now. Other informations are gathered from the relatives of the tribal healers. Tripura a state of north-east India is extended between latitude 23.5639°N, 91.6761°E and longitude 91.988153. The total area of Tripura is 10,492 sqkm, the total forest area being 24.62% of the total area. Temperature varies from 20 to 40C in summer and from 11 to 24C in winter. There is no snowfall anywhere in Tripura. Tripura is under direct influence of monsoon, with heavy rains from May to September and an average rainfall of 245 cm per year. The area of present study Fig. 1 includes Unakoti district. The area of the district is 686.97 km.

## METHODOLOGY:

The ethnobotanical survey was conducted between May 2021 and October 2022. Folklore data were collected from 17 informants, including local healers and users. Only information obtained from at least two local healers has been reported here. While collecting information, emphasis was given to the plants though animal parts are also sometimes used as medicines. The scientific names were assigned with the help of Dr Lalawmkima, co-author of this paper.

## RESULT:

In the following enumeration, the plants are arranged in their scientific names along with family in parentheses, Bengali (B) and English (E) names are applied whenever available. A total of 47 species of plants belonging to 30 different families were studied.

*Cissus quadrangularis* L. (Vitaceae)

**Vernacular name:** Bengali name: Harjora.

**Uses:** pasted stem applied in the effected part of the fracture bone.

*Abrus precatorius* L. (Fabaceae)

**Vernacular name:** Kunch (B).

**Uses:** wild liquorice. Root juice (5 ml, 3-4 times daily) mixed with sugar is used in haemorrhoids and related problems. Root infusion (20 ml, 2-3 times) daily is taken orally in leucorrhoea. A mixture of equal amounts of leaf juice and sesame oil is applied externally in rheumatism and gout. The leaf juice (5 ml, twice) daily mixed with is taken orally as antidiabetic and to stop urination antidiuretic. Powdered seeds are sniffed to get relief from severe headache.

*Acacia concinna* DC. (Fabaceae)

**Vernacular name:** Banritha (B); AKDM 69.

**Uses:** The leaf infusion (5-15 ml, 4-5 times daily) is taken orally in malaria. A mixture of infusion of leaves, black pepper and tamarind is taken orally in jaundice. Decoction of the leaves and fruits has a laxative action. The fruit decoction is used externally as hair tonic.

*Adhatodavasica* Nees (Acanthaceae)

**Vernacular name:** Vasaka (B); vasaka (E)

**Uses;** Decoction of the leaves and roots is taken orally. (5-15 ml, 2-3 times daily) in the treatment of cough, bronchitis, asthma, fever and malaria.

*Ageratum conyzoides* L. (Asteraceae)

**Vernacular name:** Pichas (B).

**Uses:** The plant is crushed and is taken orally (1-4 gram, 3-4 times daily) in the treatment of cholera. The leaf juice is applied on itches caused by insects or due to hypersensitivity. The decoction of the root and the rhizome of turmeric (*Curcuma longa*) is taken three times a day in the treatment of cancer.

*Andrographis paniculata* (Burm.f.) Wall. ex Nees (Acanthaceae)

**Vernacular name:** Kalmegh(B).

**Uses:** The leaf infusion (5-10 ml, 4-6 times daily) is taken orally in malaria and fever. Decoction of leaf, stem, root and bark is given orally (5 ml, 3-4 times daily) as stomachic and in stomach trouble.

*Anthocephalus cadamba* Miq. (Rubiaceae)

**Vernacular name:** Kadam (B).

**Uses:** The bark juice is given orally as febrifuge. Decoction of the leaves is used as gargle for the treatment of aphthae of mouth.

*Ananas comosus* (L.) Merr. (Bromeliaceae)

**Vernacular name:** Anaros (B) ;Pineapple E.

**Uses:** Decoction (15-20 ml) of the fruits and of the stalk of *Colocasia esculenta* is mixed with sugar and taken orally in bronchial asthma. The juice of the fruit and of leaves is given orally in the treatment of convulsions and in typhoid fever.

*Asparagus racemosus* Willd. (Asparagaceae)

**Vernacular name:** Satamuli (B).

**Uses:** The juice of rhizome (5 ml, twice daily) mixed with milk is given orally to remove kidney stones. The juice of the rhizome (5-10 ml) mixed with honey is given orally in anaemia and in the treatment of uterine disorders.

*Butea frondosa* Roxb. (Fabaceae)

**Vernacular name:** Jomh-obi (B).

**Uses:** Decoction of the bark (5-10 ml, 2-3 times daily) is taken orally in typhoid fever and hypertension. The powdered seed mixed with lime water is used externally in ringworm and other skin diseases. The leaves are eaten in anaemia. Overnight infusion of flower mixed with sugar (5-10 ml, 3-4 times daily) is given orally in urinary disorders like haematuria. This infusion is also used externally to stop nasal bleeding.

*Carica papaya* L. (Caricaceae)

**Vernacular name:** Pepe (B).

**Uses:** The latex is applied in tooth decay as an analgesic. The ripe fruit is taken orally in diarrhoea. Decoction of unripe fruit is given orally in jaundice. Seeds are taken orally as anthelmintics.

*Cinnamomum glanduliferum*(Wall.)Meisn. (Lauraceae)

**Vernacular name:** Daruchini (B).

**Uses:** The stem bark is crushed and the juice (5 ml, 3 times daily) is given orally in cough, bronchitis and pneumonia. The juice of fresh young leaves is also given orally for the same purposes.

*Coccinia indica* Wight & Arn.(Cucurbitaceae)

**Vernacular name:** Telakucha (B).

**Uses:** Decoction of the leaves, fruits and stem (5-10 ml, 3 times daily) is given orally in cough. The leaves, in form of curry or as decoction are taken orally in diabetes. The leaf juice is applied externally for the treatment of herpes. The fruit is eaten as galactagogue and also in cough and respiratory tract infection.

*Crotalaria juncea* L. (Fabaceae)

**Vernacular name:** Jhun Jhuni (B).

**Uses:** The seed is given orally as a blood purifier and in the treatment of impetigo, psoriasis and anaemia.

*Curcuma longa* L. (Zingiberaceae)

**Vernacular name:** Amada (B); turmeric (E).

**Uses:** The juice of the rhizome, mixed with the juice of *Mikania micrantha* is taken orally twice a day for the treatment of cancer. The rhizome is grind with crab and the decoction (15 ml, 3 times daily) is taken orally for the treatment of asthma. The juice of the rhizome (10 ml) mixed with mustard oil (3-4 drops) is taken orally 3 times daily in heart diseases. The young shoot is taken orally (3 gram) for the treatment of stomach colic.

*Datura stramonium* L. (Solanaceae)

**Vernacular name:** Dhutura (B); thorn apple (E).

**Uses:** The dried leaf is smoked in case of asthmatic problem and respiratory failure. The leaf juice (2 ml) mixed with milk (30 ml) is given orally in the treatment of venereal diseases. The crushed seed is mixed with common salt solution, and after 7 days, the mixture is given orally in the treatment of headache, pre-menstrual tension and pain. The juice of the root is used topically in dog bites.

*Dioscoreaalata* L. (Dioscoreaceae)

**Vernacular name:** Chupri-alu (B); yam (E).

**Uses:** Tuber is given orally in haemorrhoids and syphilis.

*Dioscoreabulbifera*R.Br.(Dioscoreaceae)

**Vernacular name:** Banaalu (B); yam (E).

**Uses:** Decoction of the tuber is given orally as anthelmintic. The juice of tuber (5-15 ml, 24 times daily) is taken orally in haemorrhoids, leprosy and gonorrhoea.

*Eupatorium odoratum* L. (Asteraceae)

**Vernacular name:** Pichas (B).

**Uses:** The leaf juice is used topically as an antiseptic. The juice is also applied externally to remove pinworm from the anus.

*Ficus hispida*Roxb. ex Wall. (Moraceae)

**Vernacular name:** Bot (B).

**Uses:** Decoction of the root (10ml, 3-5 times daily) is given orally in dysentery.

*Hydrocotyle asiatica* L. (Apiaceae)

**Vernacular name:** Thunimancuni (B) ; Indian pennywort (E).

**Uses:** The leaf juice (2-5 ml, 2 times daily) is given orally in diarrhoea. The juice is applied externally on the swollen parts of the body. The dried powdered leaf is mixed with mustard oil and applied as an ointment on the chest in coughs. The leaf juice (5-10 ml) mixed with honey or sugar is given orally as a blood purifier and as a sedative.

*Mimosa pudica* L. (Mimosaceae)

**Vernacular name:** Chhaitemars (B); Sensitive plant or touch me-not plant (E).

**Uses:** The leaf juice (5-10 drops twice daily) is taken orally in the treatment of haemorrhoids. The leaf is crushed and placed over the navel of the child to stop urination during sleep. The root juice is applied topically to draw out the purulent matter from boils and ulcers. Root decoction (5 ml, 4 times daily) is taken orally to disintegrate kidney stones and excrete them through urine.

*Paederiafoetida* L. (Rubiaceae)

**Vernacular name:** Bhadalipata (B).

**Uses:** The leaf juice is applied topically in toothache and gum ulcers. It is rubbed externally and taken orally (5-10 ml, 2-5 times daily) in rheumatism. A decoction of the young shoot is taken orally (10-20 ml, 2-6 times daily) in asthma and diarrhoea.

*Polygonum barbatum* L. (Polygonaceae)

**Vernacular name:** Bahubhuja (B).

**Uses:** The root juice is used externally as astringent. Decoction of the seed (10 ml) is taken orally in the treatment of abdominal colic's.

*Saraca indica* L. (Fabaceae)

**Vernacular name:** Asok (B).

**Uses:** Infusion of the bark is taken orally in uterine disorders and applied topically in scorpion-sting.

*Solanum indicum* L. (Solanaceae)

**Vernacular name:** Bekair (B); Indian night-shade (E).

**Uses:** The fruit juice is used externally in herpes. The fruit is also applied topically over painful sores caused by contact with *Drimycarpus racemosus*.

*Solanum xanthocarpum* Schrad. & J. C. Wendl. (Solanaceae)

**Vernacular name:** Kantikari (B).

**Uses:** The seed is crushed and the juice is applied over gum and teeth in toothache.

*Tamarindus indica* L. (Fabaceae)

**Vernacular name:** Tetul (B).

**Uses:** Small portion of the seed cover is removed and placed over the snake bitten area to absorb the venom. The decoction of old fruits more than 6 months old is taken orally (5 ml, twice daily) in diarrhoea.

*Terminalia chebula* Retz. (Combretaceae)

**Vernacular name:** Haritaki (B); chebulic myrobalan (E).

**Uses:** The dried powdered fruit mixed with coconut oil is used externally in the treatment of burns. Infusion of dry fruit is used as eye drops in eye infections. The fruit mixed with milk is taken orally in anaemia. The mixture of the powdered seed and rice infusion is taken orally in the treatment of pimples. The bark decoction (10-15 ml, three times a day) is taken orally in diarrhoea and dysentery. The bark juice is applied topically as a blood coagulant.

*Tinospora cordifolia* Miers (Menispermaceae)

**Vernacular name:** Gulancha (B).

**Uses:** The stem juice (5 ml, twice daily) is taken orally as antipyretic. Decoction of the dry stem (5-10 ml, 1-2 times daily) is given orally as an aphrodisiac. The juice of the leaf and stem is taken orally (10ml 2-7 times daily) as a diuretic and in gonorrhoea.

*Trichosanthes anguina* L. (Cucurbitaceae)

**Vernacular name:** Chichinga (B).

**Uses:** The plant exudates is applied around the snake bitten area to stop diffusion of venom. The fruit is cut and the juice is placed over the area to absorb venom. Fruits are taken orally as purgative, anthelmintic and emetic.

*Vitex peduncularis* Wall. (Lamiaceae)

**Vernacular name:** Awal (B).

**Uses:** Decoction of leaf, root and bark (10 -15 ml) is taken orally in the treatment of malaria and black-water-fever. The bark juice is applied externally in chest pain due to coughing.

*Cassia fistula* L. (Fabaceae)

**Vernacular name:** Shonalu (B).

**Uses:** Leave grounded and dust is used as a laxative for children and pregnant woman.

*Cassia tora* L. (Fabaceae)

**Vernacular name:** Chakunda (B).

**Uses:** Grinded seeds are used for treating skin disease like ringworm and itching.

*Boerhaviadiffusa* L. (Nyctaginaceae)

**Vernacular name:** Punarnava (B).

**Uses:** A decoction of the whole plant is used in scanty micturation, burning micturation and swelling of leg.

*Moringa oleifera* Lam. (Moringaceae)

**Vernacular name:** Sajina (B).

**Uses:** The root of the young tree is grounded into paste and applied locally in chronic rheumatism as a poultice and also used in a variety of conditions like intermitten fever, epilepsy, hysteria, dropsy etc. The oil extracted from the seed is also used for relieving joint pain in gout.

*Hibiscus macrophyllus* Roxb. (Malvaceae)

**Vernacular name:** Udal (B).

**Uses:** The fresh juice of the bark is used in dysentery, scanty and painful micturation.

*Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* L. (Malvaceae)

**Vernacular name:** Jaba (B).

**Uses:** Buds pasted and rice wash water and watery extract of the root is used in irregular menstruation.

*Psidium guajava* L. (Myrtaceae)

**Vernacular name:** Peyara (B).

**Uses:** Green leave is orally taken in dysentery and to reduce vomiting tendency and diarrhoea.

*Ziziphus mauritiana* Lam. (Rhamnaceae)

**Vernacular name:** Barai (B).

**Uses:** The extract green fresh leave is used in white discharge (leucorrhoea).

*Cissus quadrangularis* L. (Vitaceae)

**Vernacular name:** Harjora (B).

**Uses:** The pasted stem is applied in the effected part of the fracture bone.

*Alstoniascholaris* (L.) R.Br.(Apocynaceae)

**Vernacular name:** Chhatim (B).

**Uses:** The juice of green leaves are used in loose motion for children and also in indigestion. The bark is used in treating malaria and other fever.

*Hedyotis corymbosa* (L.) Lam. (Rubiaceae)

**Vernacular name:** Ketpapra (B).

**Uses:** The juice of the leave is used in treating cough and cold mixing with Tulsi. A decoction of the whole plant is used in liver treatment.

*Sesamum indicum* L. (Pedaliaceae)

**Vernacular name:** Til (B).

**Uses:** Juice of leaves are used externally as hair shampoo for dandruff.

*Achyranthes aspera* L. (Amaranthaceae)

**Vernacular name:** Apang (B).

**Uses:** Water extracted from the root is used in loose motion and also treating piles, boils and skin eruption.

*Tagetes erecta* L. (Asteraceae)

**Vernacular name:** Barha Genda (B).

**Uses:** Watery extract of the root is used in irregular menstruation.

*Solanum melongena* L. (Solanaceae)

**Vernacular name:** Begun (B).

**Uses:** Extract of juice from the flower is used in asthma.

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