

Traditional Herbal Healer

APPRECIATION

Devika Rani hails from Adaikkanoor village, Dindigul district in Tamil Nadu. She is 33 years old. She has only studied up to the 8th standard. But, she is much sought after by the women of the neighborhood for solutions to their gynaecological problems. Although she could not afford to go for higher education, Devika used her high-school education as the foundation for independent further studies to specialize in the treatment of what are known as women's diseases. She has acquired considerable expertise in the field. Women of the area repose confidence in her for the treatment because she takes pains to educate them.

Leucorrhoea

One such ailment which Devika treats is "the whites" technically called leucorrhoea. It is basically a discharge of white, viscid mucus, resulting from inflammation or irritation of the membrane lining the female genital organs. Devika has taken it upon herself to bring relief to local women from leucorrhoea. She dispenses a simple and safe preparation that she makes herself using herbal ingredients. She collects the ingredients from common wastelands and nearby forests or buys from the local herbal drugstore.

The medicine

Leaves (a handful) of *Cassia italica* (Mill.) Spr. (syn. *C. obovata* Coll.) and *Enicostema axillare* (Lam.) Raynal [syn. *Enicostema littorale* auct. non Blume, *E. verticillare* Baill.] are ground together. The paste is added to half a glassful of cow-milk. One tea-spoonful of cumin powder (*Cuminum cyminum* L.) is added to this and the ingredients are mixed well. The mixture is to be drunk on an empty stomach in the morning daily till the disease gets cured. Devika claims that she has treated 20 patients using the above formulation.



Address

W/O Mr. Ponnadaikkan
Adaikkanoor, Tal: Natham
Dist: Dindigul, Tamil Nadu

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CCD, Tamil Nadu



Enicostema axillaris
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The medicinal properties of *Oroxylum indicum* ***The traditional community knowledge of*** ***various tribes of Manipur such as Anal, Kuki,*** ***Mao, Maram, Tangkul and Zeliangrong***

APPRECIATION

Oroxylum Indicum Vent., a member of family Bignoniaceae is mostly sighted along the river banks or slopes of the hills. Except in the western drier area, the plant is distributed throughout India and South East Asia. The use of this plant for the treatment of various ailments is part of the local tribal communities' knowledge of various tribes in Manipur such as Anal, Kuki, Mao, Maram, Tangkul and Zeliangrong.

Address

c/o P. Soloman Maram
Senapati, Manipur

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GIAN-NE

The medicinal properties of *Oroxylum indicum*

The decoction of the bark is taken for curing gastric ulcer and a paste made of the bark powder is applied for mouth cancer, scabies and other skin diseases. The seed is ground with fire-soot and the paste applied to the neck for quick relief of tonsil pain. Also, a paste made of the bark is applied to the wounds of animals to kill maggots. Decoction of the bark is given to animals for de-worming. The sword-like fruit or a branch of the plant is used by the farmers to kill crabs in wet paddy fields.

Potential anti-cancer properties

During a botanical exploration tour to Senapati district (1999) which is situated in the northern part of Manipur, Mr.A.A.Mao of the Botanical Survey of India, learned from Maram Naga villagers that a man of about 50 years of age, Pashi Maram had been diagnosed with cancer in 1995. He underwent chemotherapy and radiotherapy for one month and his family was informed that due to the advanced stage of the disease, he would live a

maximum of six months more. On the advice of a Tangkhul Naga whom he had met in Imphal, Pashi Maram then took an herbal decoction of the bark of *Oroxylum indicum*. Surprisingly after coming home, he led a normal life till 2000 with intakes of only pain relief medicines and analgesics along with the herbal medicine. But in January, 2001 he passed away.

The method of preparation

The bark from the trunk, branches, roots etc., of the *Oroxylum indicum* tree is stripped off and they are dried in the sun for around 2-3 days. After drying, the surface layer is scraped off and a handful of the dried barks/roots are boiled in two to two and a half litres of water for about one and a half hours till the liquid attains a dark red colour. After this the mixture is cooled down and then strained to separate the liquid from the mixture and this liquid is stored in a bottle. One cup of this liquid is then taken three to four times a day. A spoonful of honey is added to the decoction to neutralise its bitter taste.

