

## FOLK CLAIMS FROM SUGALIS OF ANDHRA PRADESH FOR THE TREATMENT OF PARALYSIS

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***ABSTRACT:** During the course of ethnomedicinal investigations in Andhra Pradesh some interesting indigenous medicinal plants have been reported for the treatment of paralysis amongst sugalis. Firsthand information was gathered through persona interviews with local in habitats. Apart from this a note on the ethnography of the tribe is discussed.*

### INTRODUCTION

Paralysis is a relatively common chronic malady of the central nervous system that produces such striking symptoms that almost any observing person can recognize it at a glance. The stooped posture, the slowness of movement, the carriage of the arms in front of the body, the quick short-stepped gait, the fixity of facial expression, and the tremor of the hands are the characteristic signs.

The onset of the disease usually occurs, in late adult life, but it may begin as early as in the third decade. The course is slowly progressive over 10 to 20 or more years, the first symptoms may be the scuffing of one foot in walking, a sense of heaviness of a limb or a gentle tremor of one hand, the other symptoms follow in slow procession. The hand writing becomes small and this and other manual skills are gradually lost. Speech is poorly articulated, swallowing and chewing are laborious locomotion becomes increasingly difficult, and ultimately the patient finds it an effort even to rise from bed or a chair or to walk; and there is a tendency to lose balance and to fall. In the advanced stages, the patient is greatly

handicapped in all voluntary movements but usually is not paralysed. An unexpected call for action may momentarily excite the patient to perform some movement with surprising facility. The senses and the intellect are not damaged. There is a tendency for more than one member of a family to be affected.

Paralysis is the temporary or permanent loss of function, usually motor but occasionally sensory. Due to impairment of the nervous system or the muscles.

Paralysis may be a highly localized condition, confined, for example, to a muscle in the face, as a Bell's palsy, or to one or two joints of the hand, as in cases of arthritis and rheumatism. As a more generalized condition, paralysis may be paraplegic (affecting the lower part of the body), tetraplegic (affecting all four limbs) hemiplegic (affecting one side of the body) or diplegic (affecting both sides).

The most common cause of paralysis is damage to the nerves, spinal cord or brain the damage may result from an injury failure

of a part of the brain, deterioration of a part of the brain, degeneration of parts of the nervous system etc. pressure on a nerve causes a common form of temporary paralysis. May be induced by hypnosis and by a number of drugs, notably anesthetics wood alcohol, grain alcohol, arsenic, lead and Jamaica ginger taken into the body in excessive quantities act as paralyzing poisons.

On investigations it is found that an ancient system to cure the paralysis has been protected and passed on from generation to generation orally among sugalis a tribe which is spread all through Andhra Pradesh. The study of this system is the subject of this present paper.

### **Ethnography of tribe**

The Lambadies, are called by various names in different places like Lambani, Brinjari or Banjari, Boipari, sugali or sukali. Sugalis are the well known tribe of porters found all over western and southern parts of India. Lambadis claim their descendance from vali and sugriva, the two tribal chiefs mentioned in *Ramayana*. The womenfolk of this tribe particularly present a distinct feature. They are the most robust among women of Indian origin. They can undergo a great deal of labour with apparent ease. They are found of peculiar, ornaments so singularly chosen they are chaste and affable. They use bows, arrows, sword and shields.

The common occupation of the lamnbadis is transport, especially in the hill and forest tracts with difficult access, of grain and other produce on pack bullocks. They live in detached clusters of rude huts, called thandas, at some distance from established villages. Each thanda has a headman called the nayaka, whose word is law, and whose office is hereditary. Each settlement has

also a priest or medicine man who recognizes and diagnosis the diseases of different kinds. He prescribes medicines from the flora around him. Various plant medicines are prescribed to sure paralysis.

### **Methodology**

Periodic ethnomedicinal field collection trips were made to tribal pockets and a number of villages in Andhra Pradesh. Intensive interviews were conducted with tribal Nayakas at their dwellings according to the methods described by Jain and Rao (1983). Nagaraju and Rao (1989, 90).

### **Enumeration of Medicinal Plants**

#### **1. Adivinimma – *Atalantia monophylla* (L.)**

The fruits rind of this plant can be partially dried with the help of sun-light. The oil extracted from this rind can be used in the treatment of paralysis. The oil can be administered externally at the affected areas of the body.

#### **2. Doolagondi – *Mucuna pruriens* (L.)**

Decoction is made with the help of the roots of “Doolagondi” and given orally in paralysis. Leaf paste mixed with butter is applied on the opposite side of the part which is paralysed.

#### **3. Veluturu chettu- *Dichrostachys cinerea* (L.) Wight & Arn**

Juice is prepared from the root of veluturu chettu’ about half a glass, 5 ml of garlic juice and a pinch of black pepper powder are mixed and the mixture is given to the patient once in a week for about 6 weeks.

#### **4. Bonthajamudu – *Euphorbia antiquorum* (L.) sp**

Latex of *euphorbia antiquorum* is applied on the paralysed part. About ½ teaspoonful of rhizome powder of *acorus calamus* is given with honey until the diseases is cured.

5. Amudamu- **Ricinus communis (L)**

Leaves with petioles are burnt and ash is extracted. A table spoon of the ash is mixed with honey and given in early morning for about 3 days for the patient suffering from facial paralysis.

6. Chirubenda- **Sida cordifolia (L)**

Oil is extracted from the seed of chirubenda is rubbed on the paralysed part.

7. Musti – **Strychnos nux – Vomica**

When the legs are paralysed, the patient is made to stand in a pit a 5 to 6 kilos of mushti fruits are thrown around his legs. After an hour the patient is asked to chew rice. If he feels bitterness in mouth he is taken out of the pit. On repeating the process at regular intervals, the paralysis is cured.

8. Tippa Teega – **Tinospora cordifolia**

&

Nelavemu- **Andrographis paniculata**

&

Amudamu- **Ricinus communis (L)**

&

Turakavepa – **Melia Azadirach (L)**

The stem of Tippa Teega, root of Nelavemu, root of amuduam and stem of turakavepa are mixed in equal proportions and decoction is prepared. Half a glass of this decoct on is given to the patient daily. It gives strength to the affected part and cures paralysis.

9. Kanuga – **Pongamia pinnata**

Paste is prepared from the root of kanuga and mixed with milk massaged gently on the paralysed part.

10. Nelamulaga- **Solanum surattense Burm.f.**

The juice extracted from the fruits and mixed with sesame oil, is applied on affected part.

11. Akujemudu- **Euphorbia nivulia Buch-Ham**

Decoction prepared from the burnt roots and mixed with any soaked material is applied on paralysed part for 3 weeks. After wards, burnt mixture of snake- bones, phthon skin is applied with petroleum jelly on incisions made on the paralysed site to treat paralysis.

### Discussion

The plant species used by the tribal medicine man for the treatment of paralysis are very simple and commonly available in most of the forests. The drugs are cheaper, easy to procure and administer.

Further researches would be needed on these herbs to ascertain their biologically active compounds and their efficacy against paralysis. Tribal have strong faith in their own traditional recipes. The tribal medical lore has been handed down through generations, not by faculties and bodies, colleges or research centers, but through the individual training of pupils, by skilled practitioners who are masters of their craft.

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