

Short report (Ethno)

An ethnobotanical survey of medicinal plants used by the Didayi tribe of Malkangiri district of Orissa, India

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Abstract

An ethnobotanical survey was carried out among the ethnic community (Didayi) in Malkangiri district, Orissa. A total of 53 medicinal plant species belonging to 34 families and 52 different species are described under this study.

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Keywords: Didayi tribe; Medicinal plants; Orissa; Malkangiri district

Study area

The Malkangiri district is located between 17° 45' to 18° 40' N latitude and 81° 10' to 82° 00' E longitude. It occupies an area of 5791 km² with luxuriant vegetation. The district is bounded by Koraput district (a portion) of Orissa, Vishakhapatnam and East Godavari districts of Andhra Pradesh in the east, Bastar district of Chhattisgarh in the west, Koraput district of Orissa in the north and East Godavari and Khammam districts of Andhra Pradesh in the south (Fig. 1). The general topography of the area is of broken mountains intercepted by large riverbeds and watercourses. The altitude varies from 600 m near western side to 1200 m on the eastern side with mountain peaks and ridges. Sandy and clay type soil predominate the entire district. The climate of major portion of the district is influenced by its varied elevation. The minimum and maximum temperature is 11.2 °C and 44 °C in December and May, respectively. Humidity is generally high especially in the monsoon (June–July) and post monsoon (August–October) months. It receives about 1500 mm rainfall annually. Major portion of the annual rainfall is received during southwest monsoon between July and September. The vegetation of the area comprises of semi-evergreen, riverine, moist and dry deciduous forests [1].

Population

The Didayi — a primitive tribal community of Orissa is the focus of the present study. They are a little known Austro-Asiatic tribe in the hilly region of the Malkangiri district and confined to a stretch of about 32 km in Machhkund

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valley between Dumduma and Kondakamberu plateau in Eastern Ghats region. Total population of the community is 5727 [2] and they are found nowhere else in the world. The present study comprises 527 inhabitants of six villages. They are considered as vulnerable ethno-cultural groups in India [3]. Most of them are inhabited in hilly areas characterised by rugged and mountainous terrains with an altitude ranging approximately from 600 to 1300 m. Their

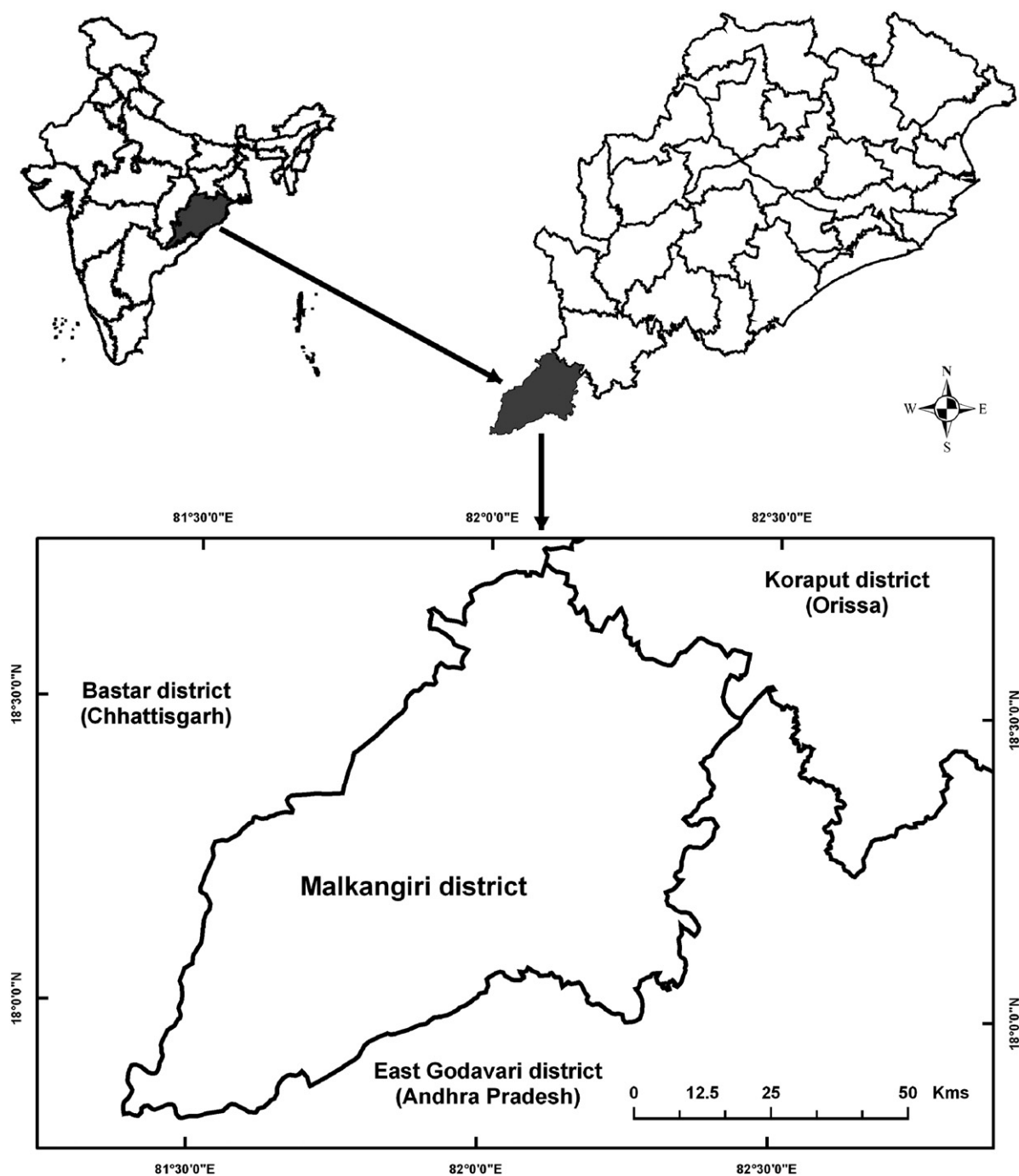


Fig. 1. Location map of Malkangiri district, Orissa.

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