



# Traditional Medicinal Practice By Tribal People For The Treatment of Piles.

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## ABSTRACT:

Traditional medicine is used by tribal population of rural India since ancient times. Due to lack of basic health facilities in most rural areas, the people have to depend on local folk healers for their common ailments. Piles is a common disease for which many people still turn to traditional folk healers for treatment. Folk healers use a variety of local plants and ingredients to treat piles. Both oral medicine and medicine for local application are advised by the healers. The present study is a collection of different folk claims for the treatment of Piles practised by the tribal people of Kamrup(r) district and a brief analysis of the claims.

**Key words:** folk claims, tribal healers, piles.

## INTRODUCTION:

According to WHO Traditional medicine refers to the knowledge, skills and practices based on the theories, beliefs and experiences indigenous to different cultures, used in the maintenance of health and in the prevention, diagnosis, improvement or treatment of physical and mental illness<sup>1</sup>. Traditional medicinal practices are in use in most parts of the world since ancient times. Great contributions have been made by traditional medicinal practitioners to human health, particularly as primary health care providers at the community level. More than 80 % of the world's population rely on traditional herbal medicine for their primary health care. Especially the tribal people who are mostly poor and underdeveloped still rely on traditional healers for solution to their common ailments. Healthcare facility in Rural India is in deplorable condition. Most villages still lack the basic health care facility. Due to inaccessibility of health care facility the people depend on the local folk healers for treatment of various problems. Most common diseases treated by the healers are Jaundice, fever, measles, pox, piles, white discharge, menstrual disorders, infertility etc. Another reason for the people to go to the local healers is the taboo associated with diseases like piles or menstrual disorders. The people feel shame to speak freely of such diseases and hence are reluctant to go to hospital. They prefer the privacy of the local healers who is known to them and with whom they can discuss freely. In most of the villages there are one or more healers who give treatment of different diseases to the villagers in need. The knowledge of the folk healers is passed on from generations to generations. While lack of interest among the present generation has led to decline in the practice of traditional medical practices and subsequent loss to the vast and valuable knowledge of folk medical claims. On the other hand many folk healers have stopped practicing their knowledge due to fear of being branded as witch and are afraid to showcase their knowledge freely. There is urgent need to collect these folk claims, validate the claims and preserve this knowledge so that this can be used for the benefit of mankind.

. Piles or “*Kesumuria*” as it is locally known in villages of Assam is one of the commonest diseases where help of these folk healers is sought by many. Piles or Haemorrhoids are dilated veins located near the anus. It is formed by branches of the superior, middle and inferior rectal veins. In normal condition these vessels act as cushions to the anal canal. Due to various causes like straining during bowel movement, sitting in the toilet for a long time, chronic constipation or a family history, these vessels sometimes get swollen. It is divided into two categories: Internal and external haemorrhoids. Internal haemorrhoids means it is within the anal canal and internal to the anal orifice. External haemorrhoid is situated outside the anal orifice. Common symptoms of piles are:

1. Bleeding per rectum: bleeding which is bright red and usually splashes in the pan as stool comes out.

2. Mucous discharge: is a particular symptom of prolapsed haemorrhoid due to engorged mucous membrane. Itching in anus is caused by such mucous discharge.
3. Irritation and pain around anus: usually due to associated thrombosis or fissure-in-ano.
4. Prolapse: Prolapse is a later symptom. In the beginning prolapsed is minimal. It is divided into four degrees.
  - i. **Stage I**—Enlargement and bleeding.
  - ii. **Stage II**—Protrusion of hemorrhoids with spontaneous reduction.
  - iii. **Stage III**—Protrusion of hemorrhoids with manual reduction possible.
  - iv. **Stage IV**—Irreducible protrusion of hemorrhoids usually containing both internal and external components with or without acute thrombosis or strangulation.
5. Anaemia: often seen in long standing cases due to persistent and profuse bleeding.

Complication of haemorrhoid is excessive bleeding and thrombosis. Apart from these other complications are strangulation, gangrene and fibrosis.

Exact cause of haemorrhoids is still unknown and there exist many myths regarding the aetiology and pathophysiology of haemorrhoids. It appears that the dysregulation of the vascular tone and vascular hyperplasia may be a causative factor in hemorrhoidal development<sup>2</sup>.

At present there is no satisfactory treatment for piles in modern system of medicine. In most instances, hemorrhoids are treated conservatively, using many methods such as lifestyle modification, fiber supplement, suppository-delivered anti-inflammatory drugs, and administration of venotonic drugs. Non-operative approaches include sclerotherapy and, preferably, rubber band ligation, hemorrhoidectomy and stapled hemorrhoidopexy, infrared photocoagulation, cryotherapy, bipolar diathermy, direct-current electrotherapy and haemorrhoidectomy. An operation is indicated when non-operative approaches have failed or complications have occurred. After surgical treatment piles tends to recur or cause other side effects<sup>3</sup>.

The Ayurvedic medical science provides effective cure for Piles or Arsa in the form of oral as well as surgical procedure(Ksharasutra).

However, most people are usually embarrassed to talk about their piles and ignore the symptoms till it can be tolerated. They take the help of local folk healers for the treatment of piles.

### Materials and method:

The study was conducted in various tribal villages in Kamrup district during 2015-2016 under the Tribal Health care research programme of Central Council of Research in Ayurveda and Siddha. Field trips were made in ST dominated villages of Kamrup district and the folk healers were identified. The knowledge of the folk healers were collected in specific Performa and documented accordingly. This study is a collection of different folk claims for the treatment of Piles practised by the tribal people.

### Result and discussion:

The folk medicine practised by the healers for the treatment of piles comprise of a variety of ingredients. During the study period 7 compositions containing medicinal plants as well as animal products were recorded. The different practices are given below in the table showing the local name, Sanskrit name, scientific name, family, part used and method of use for each of the ingredients used.

**Table: folk medicine used for the treatment of piles<sup>4,5,6</sup>:**

Use	Vernacular name	Sanskrit name	Scientific name	Family	Part used	Method of use
1.Local application	i) Jaluk	i)Marich	i)Piper nigrum	Piperaceae	i)Fruit	All ingredients are crushed and made into a paste which is applied over the piles mass till it
	ii) Bakul	ii)Bakul	ii)Mimusops elangi	Sapotaceae	ii)Flower	
	iii) Saru Manimuni	iii)Mandukaparni	iii)Hydrocotyle rotundifolia	Araliaceae	iii)Leaves	
	iv)Sarpajiva	iv)Ksetraparpata	iv)Hedyotis diffusa	Rubiaceae	iv)root	

	v)Sendur	v)Mridukuncika	v)Physallis minima	Solanaceae	v)Root	falls off.
2.Local application	i)Jaluk 25gms	ii)Marich	i)Piper nigrum	Piperaceae	i)fruit	Ingredients i), ii),iii) are fried till burned. This ash is mixed with 3 camphor and coconut oil and applied over the piles mass till it falls off
	ii)Naharu 25gms	ii)Rason	ii)Allium sepa	Liliaceae	ii)rhizome	
	iii)Amarlata 3 pieces	iii)Guduchi	iii)Tinospora cordifolia	Menispermaceae	iii)stem	
	iv)Karpur 3pieces	iv)Karpoor	iv)Cinnamomum camphora	Lauraceae	iv)exudates	
3. Local application	i)Kesu	i)Bhunag	i)Lumbricus Terrestries	i)Lumbricidae	i)Head	All ingredients are burnt and the ash applied locally.
	ii)Elandhu	ii)Grihadhum	ii)(C <sub>3</sub> H) <sub>n</sub> :Soot	ii)NA	ii) -	
	iii)Uktihor	iii)Apamarga	iii)Acarynthus aspera	iii)Amaranthaceae	iii)root	
4.Oral	i)kesu	i)Bhunag	i)Lumbricus Terrestries	Lumbricidae	i)Head	All ingredients are made into a decoction.30 ml of the decoction is taken twice daily for 5-7 days.
	ii)Era	ii)Eranda	ii)Ricinus communis	Euphorbiaceae	ii)Bud	
	iii)Aalit gojabon	iii)Information not available	iii)Hypericum Japonicum	Hypericaceae	iii)Whole plant	
	iv)Amrolipuk	iv)pippilika	iv)Oecophylla samaragdina	Formicidae	iv)Exudates	
	v)Sengmuri	v)Lakshmana	v)Lasia spinosa	Araceae	v)Rhizome	
5.Oral	i)Bhektita	ii)Bhantak	i)Clerodendrum infortunatum	Lamiaceae	i)root	All ingredients are powdered and taken 2tsf twice daily in empty stomach for 3 days.
	ii)Bhelkuri	ii)Bhantaki	ii)Solanum tarvum	Solanaceae	ii)stem	
	iii)Bonbhog	iii)Dronapuspi	iii)Leucas aspera	labiatae	iii)root	
	iv)Sengmuri	iv)Lakshmana	iv)Lasia spinosa	Araceae	iv)rhizome	
	v)Jaluk	v)Marich	v)piper nigrum	Piperaceae	v)fruit	
	vi)Kesu	vi)Bhunag	vi)Lumbricus terrestries	Lumbricidae	vi)head	
6.Oral	i)Kehraji	i)Bhringaraj	i)Eclipta alba	Compositae	i)whole plant	50 ml of juice extracted is taken daily till recovery
	ii)Lajukibon	ii)Lajjalu	ii)Mimosa Pudica	Mimosidae	ii)whole plant	
7. Oral	Bel	Bilva	Aegle marmalos	Rutaceae	leaves	Juice of 9 leaves of bilva daily

The folk healers use a combination of various medicinal plants for oral use as well as local application. Use of single herb for treatment is rare. They mix number of herbal ingredients to make a compound

formulation. Some of the claims also include animal parts. Many of the compositions have common ingredients. Ingredients like Marica ( *Piper nigrum*), Bhunag ( *Lumbricus terrestris*) etc. are repeated in many of the formulations. One common and very interesting ingredient used in many compositions is *Lumbricus terrestris*, (Common name: Earthworm). Though there is no direct reference of the use of earthworm in the treatment of piles, its use as anti-inflammatory is mentioned in Ayurveda<sup>7</sup>.

The predisposing factor leading to piles is most often a long standing complaint of digestion. So most of the ingredients used as oral medicine is directed toward relieving the gastrointestinal problems like *Hydrocotyle rotundifolia*, *Piper nigrum*, *Piper longum*, *Allium sepa*<sup>8</sup>. Most of these plants have deepan, pachan(digestive), sulahara( relieves pain) properties. *H rotundifolia* inhibits *P mirabilis*, a common opportunistic pathogen of the GIT causing GIT infections<sup>9</sup>. *Hedyotis diffusa* has anticancer, anti-inflammatory, hepatoprotective property<sup>10</sup>. *Tinospora cordifolia* is an important ayurvedic medicine used in the treatment of fever, jaundice, chronic diarrhea, cancer, dysentery, bone fracture, pain, asthma, skin disease, poisonous insect, snake bite, eye disorders. In *Bhavprakash Nighantu*, its medicinal properties are mentioned for cure of bleeding piles apart from Jaundice, skin disease, anaemia, worms, promoting longevity etc<sup>11</sup>. The flowers of *Mimosops elangi* have wound healing property<sup>12</sup>. *Camphor* has been used topically to relieve pain and treat warts, cold sores, haemorrhoids, and osteoarthritis<sup>13</sup>. Camphor activates some of TRP (transient receptor potential) channels like TRPV1, TRPV3, TRPM8 and inhibits TRPA1, causing warm sensation, excitation and desensitization of sensory nerves, relieving the pain, itch and irritation in applied area<sup>14</sup>. *Clerodendrum infortunatum* has antibacterial, antihelmintic, analgesic, anti-inflammatory action<sup>15</sup>. According to Bhavprakash nighantu *Ricinus communis* seeds are used in treatment of piles apart from other uses<sup>16</sup>. Grihadhum or soot is used to check postpartum haemorrhage and an ointment made from it is used for burns and inflammation in traditional practice<sup>17</sup>. *Physallis minima* has antibacterial property<sup>18</sup>. *Hypericum perforatum* has wound healing property<sup>19</sup>. Leaves of *Aegele marmelos* anti-inflammatory, antipyretic and analgesic properties<sup>20</sup>. *Oecophylla samaragdina* or weaver ant is used in traditional medicine for rheumatism and stomach infections and as an aphrodisiac<sup>21</sup>. In vitro and in vivo study on *Centella asiatica* revealed wound healing activity<sup>22</sup>. Except *Hypericum japonicum*, most of the plants are mentioned in Ayurveda with different uses. Only two viz Rason and Eranda has been directly mentioned for use in piles<sup>23</sup>. The folk healers claim to have 80-85% cure rate. People not only from the locality but also from far off places, come to the healers for treatment. Many of the patients who were interviewed also gave positive response.

### Conclusion:

Collection of folk claims is quite helpful to bring to light new drugs of herbal origin with better efficacy and increase the range of availability of herbal medicine for Piles,. Detailed studies on these folklore claims regarding validation, isolation of active principles, pharmaco-toxicological test and clinical trials to assess efficacy and safety of uses are required. Pharmaceutical researchers acknowledge that screening plants on the basis of information derived from traditional knowledge saves time and resources. Moreover, there is an urgent need to conserve plants with high medicinal value to ensure their existence and survival against massive, indiscriminate deforestation.

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