

Ethnomedicinal survey on acute wound treatment in the indigenous community in Dambana

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Sri Lanka possesses a unique indigenous medical system known as *Deshiya Vedakama*, rooted in centuries-old traditions passed down through generations. Within this context, the Dambana indigenous community stands out for its distinctive ethnomedicinal practices, especially in the treatment of acute wounds. This study explores the traditional wound healing methods practiced by the Veddhas of Dambana, aiming to identify medicinal plants used and evaluate the uniqueness of their healing system. Data were collected through structured interviews with indigenous practitioners in Dambana and its suburbs. Approximately thirty plant species were documented, each identified by their Sinhala and scientific names, and categorized according to their healing properties— *Vranashodhana* (wound cleaning), *Vranaropana* (wound healing), and hemostatic (bleeding control) actions. Notably, three plants— Gadabo (*Tridax procumbens*), Kaheyyan (species unidentified), and Gongotu (*Streblus asper*)—were found to be exclusive to the Dambana community's medical repertoire, not widely used in mainstream Ayurveda. The findings reveal that the Dambana healing system is deeply tied to nature and cultural heritage. It is transmitted orally within the community and guarded with strict confidentiality, often resistant to external inquiry. However, due to environmental degradation, modernization, and diminishing interest among younger generations, this invaluable knowledge faces the risk of disappearance. The study underscores the importance of recognizing, documenting, and protecting such indigenous knowledge systems. Further pharmacological research into the unique plant species identified may provide insights for integrative wound healing therapies. Building trust and preserving the lifestyle and environment of the Dambana native community are vital to safeguarding their medicinal legacy.

Keywords: *Ethnomedicine, Acute wound, Dambana native community, Traditional medicine, Medicinal plants*