

Development of Digital Repository for documentation of **Ethno-medicinal plants used by different tribal communities of eastern Odisha** for holistic healthcare management



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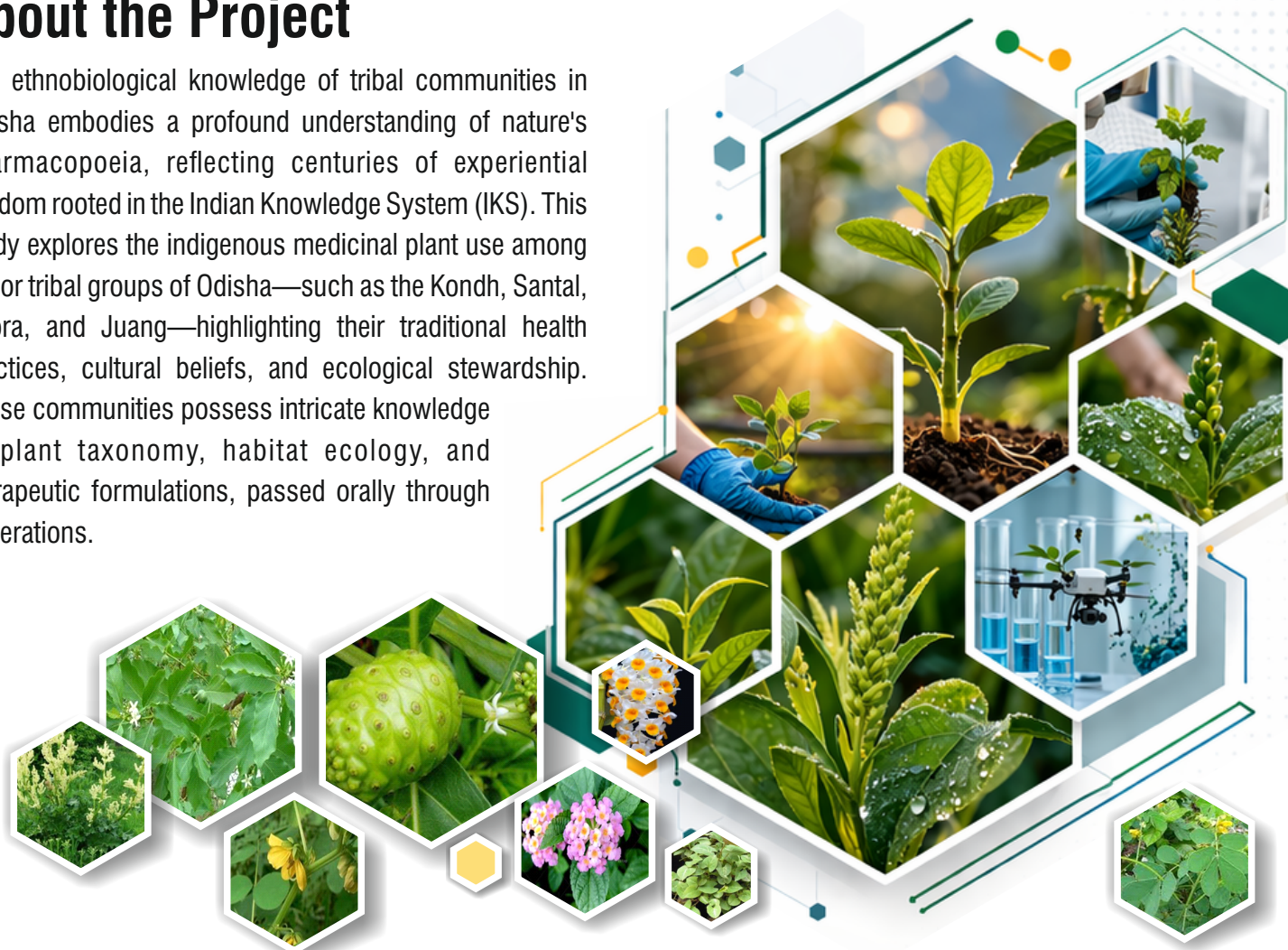
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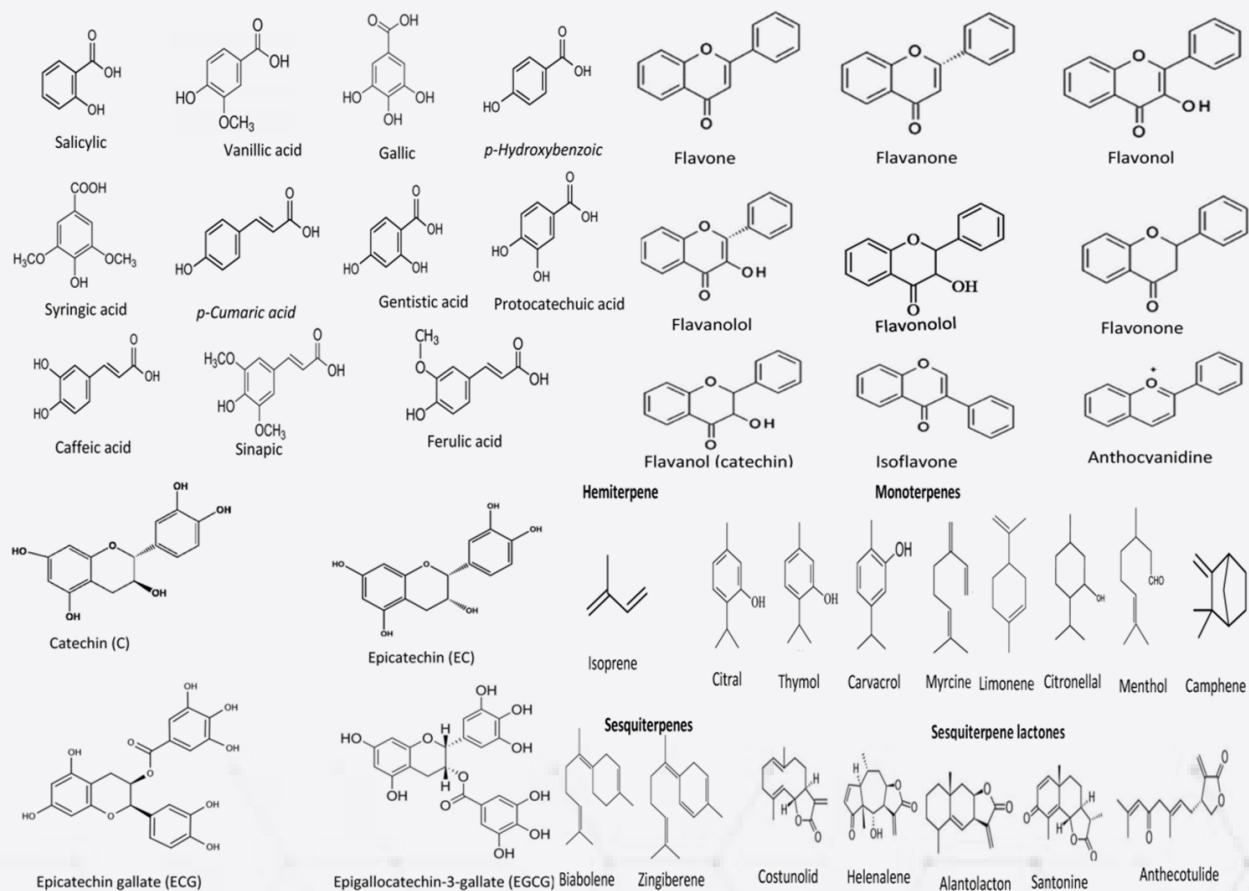
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About the Project

The ethnobiological knowledge of tribal communities in Odisha embodies a profound understanding of nature's pharmacopoeia, reflecting centuries of experiential wisdom rooted in the Indian Knowledge System (IKS). This study explores the indigenous medicinal plant use among major tribal groups of Odisha—such as the Kondh, Santal, Saora, and Juang—highlighting their traditional health practices, cultural beliefs, and ecological stewardship. These communities possess intricate knowledge of plant taxonomy, habitat ecology, and therapeutic formulations, passed orally through generations.



Medicinal flora such as *Rauvolfia serpentina*, *Terminalia chebula*, *Withania somnifera*, and *Curcuma longa* are extensively used to treat ailments ranging from fever, wounds, and digestive disorders to chronic illnesses. The IKS framework provides a holistic perspective that integrates spiritual, environmental, and health dimensions, emphasizing balance and sustainability. Documentation and validation of this ethnobiological wisdom are vital for developing bio-conservation strategies and novel drug discovery. Moreover, integrating traditional practices with contemporary pharmacological research can bridge knowledge systems and foster equitable benefit-sharing with tribal custodians.



The study underscores the urgency of preserving this living heritage amid modernization pressures and ecological degradation. By recognizing the tribal medicinal practices of Odisha as a vital component of India's intangible cultural heritage, the research advocates for their inclusion in national biodiversity conservation and health policy frameworks, ensuring that indigenous voices remain central to the evolving discourse on sustainable health and biodiversity management. Through the conversion of tacit indigenous knowledge into a scientifically organized digital platform, this project is enhancing knowledge continuity, facilitating inter-disciplinary research, and informing decision-making on biodiversity conservation and sustainable healthcare practices. Simultaneously, ethical considerations including intellectual property protection and equitable benefit-sharing are being incorporated to ensure responsible and community-sensitive knowledge governance.

This will ensure the preservation of the indigenous intellectual heritage for the coming generations. The enhancement of the IKS in the empirical knowledge systems will make it more relevant to the present-day challenges faced by society. This IKS sanctioned project is one of the examples of the efforts put forth to demonstrate the translational approach for empirical knowledge-driven health assessments in tribal communities of eastern Odisha.