Ethno-medicinal Resources Used By the Temuan in Ulu Kuang Village

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ABSTRACT Orang Asli is a term used for the aborigines in Peninsular Malaysia. This study reveals the ethno-medicines used by one of the tribes of Orang Asli, Temuan in Ulu Kuang Village, Gombak, Selangor, Malaysia. The study which was conducted through semi-structured questionnaire found a total of 47 species of plants from 36 families, 7 species of mushrooms from 5 families, and 12 species of animals from 10 families being utilized as medicines by the villagers. Among the ailments treated, hypertension was shown to be the most treated ailment utilizing 12 species of natural resources in total. The most utilized species of plant, mushroom, and animal by the Temuan in Ulu Kuang Village for medicine are *Eurycoma longifolia*, *Lignosus rhinocerus*, and *Hystrix brachyura*, respectively.

INTRODUCTION

Natural resources such as plants, animals, and mushrooms play a vital role since ancient times to treat illnesses. In recent years, the research on ethno-medicinal resources has been extensive in order to develop new products and medicines to treat diseases. Medicines derived from natural resources posed a potentially safer and more reliable medicine than synthetically produced drugs.

The Temuan is one of the eighteen tribes of Orang Asli or aborigines in Peninsular Malaysia. They belong to the ethnicity of Proto-Malays who originated from middle Asia and settled in Peninsular Malaysia around 4000 years ago (Fix 1995; Lim et al. 2010). They have been utilizing the natural resources around them all this time for food, daily used materials – and medicinal purposes. The Temuan are known as ‘Orang Bukit’ or Hill People among the Orang Asli since they reside in jungle areas near the hill side. Thus, they are among the most knowledgeable Orang Asli tribes on natural resources utilization, especially for medicinal purposes. This study gathered ethno-medicinal information from the Temuan in Ulu Kuang Village to treat and cure ailments. It is of great importance to record such traditional knowledge and publish the scientific data before it becomes completely depleted with the loss of natural habitats surrounding them and the passing away of the older generations.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in the year 2010 in Ulu Kuang Village, Kuang, Gombak, Selangor, which is located at N 03° 15' 46.0" E 101° 34' 59.5" and a total area of 121.46 hectares. The interviews were conducted with semi-constructed questionnaires among the villagers who possess the knowledge of medicinal usage of natural resources recommended by the head of the village or ‘Tok Batin’ and Malaysian Department of Orang Asli Development officers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study reveals 47 species of plants from 36 families (Table 1); 7 species of mushrooms from 5 families (Table 2); and 12 species of animals from 10 families (Table 3) are utilized by the Temuan in Ulu Kuang Village, Gombak, Selangor, Malaysia for various medicinal purposes.

From the result, it shows that *Eurycoma longifolia*, *Lignosus rhinocerus*, and *Hystrix brachyura* are used in treating the highest number of ailments in comparison to other species of plants, mushrooms, and animals with four ailments treated, each. *Eurycoma longifolia* is used in treating muscle pain, diabetes, hypertension, and overall health using its leaf and...