INTRODUCTION

Excretory products of plant or animal origin do not have well-defined cellular structure. Gums, latex, and oils are the important excretory products of plant origin, which have been used as herbal recipes in ethnomedicine to cure different human as well as veterinary ailments. Gums are translucent and amorphous substances, non-starch polysaccharides, and soluble in water. The main source of gums is higher land plants, red and brown algae etc. In higher plants, gums are produced by different plant parts such as plant cell wall, stem bark, fruits, seeds, tubers, and roots. Depending on the source of availability, gums are three types, namely (i) plant-derived gums: Depending on the secretion part, plant gums are four types, i.e., stem gums: Produced by exudation from the stem of tree or by tapping method either by accidental or wounds caused by insects’ borers (e.g., gum arabic, gum ghatti, and gum karaya); seed gums: Isolated from the endosperm portion of some seeds (e.g., gum guar and locust bean gum): extracts such as pectin, tubers, and roots gums such as potato starch; (ii) animal origin gums: Example: Chitin and chitosan, chondroitin and hyaluronic acid; and (iii) algil/microbial gums: Gums isolated from marine algae or from microorganisms (e.g., xanthine and dextran) [Choudhary and Pawar, 2014] [1]. Majority of the gums are exuded from the plant stem, only few gums are obtained from roots, leaves, and other parts of the plant. The gum-yielding families are Leguminosae (Fabaceae), Sterculiaceae, Anacardiaceae, Combretaceae, Meliaceae, Rosaceae, and Rutaceae (Goswami and Naik, 2014) [2]. Plant-derived gums are good source of nutraceuticals, pharmaceuticals, as well as calcium, potassium, magnesium, sodium, and phosphorus (Upadhyay, 2017) [3].

Eastern Ghats are a long chain of broken hills and elevated plateaus, running about 1750 km with an average width of about 100 km between Mahanadi and Vaigai rivers along the Indian East coast through Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and Tamil Nadu (Narasimhan and Kumar, 2003) [4]. Eastern Ghats in the state are discontinuous range of hills situated between 12° 38’ and 22° 00’ N latitudes and 78° 50’-84° 46’ E longitudes (Legris and Homji, 1982) [5]. Ethnobotanically, Eastern Ghats of Andhra Pradesh were well explored by ethnobotanists such as Hemadri, 1981; Raju and Reddy, 1998; Nagalakshmi, 2001; Ram and Raju, 2001; and Reddy, 2008 [6-10], and majority of them were focused on different diseases such as women ailments (Ratnam and Raju, 2005) [11], bone fractures (Ratnam and Raju, 2008) [12], poisonous bites (Saturas et al., 2006) [13], epilepsy (Sandhya et al., 2017) [14], and respiratory disorders (Reddy et al., 2006) [15]. The review of literature on ethnobotany of the study area indicates that no specific report was published on ethnobotanical importance of gums. Hence, the present work is initiated to collect firsthand information on gums from local/rural people inhabiting in and around the forests of Eastern Ghats of Andhra Pradesh.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Intensive plant exploration trips were conducted in the forest areas of Eastern Ghats to record firsthand information form the tribal people residing foreside villages. The information recorded based on the personal interviews with the tribal healers/local Vaidyas who are formulating or advocating the therapeutic uses of plant gums to the local people. The detailed information regarding scientific name, local name, family, part used, mode of preparation/administration, dosimetry, etc., were recorded and systematically analyzed. The plants shown by the tribal people collected and the information was recorded in the field notebook. The collected information was cross-checked with the information from neighboring herbalists and also with available literature. The specimens were identified with the help of local/regional floras (Gamale, 1935; Puliaith et al., 1995) [16,17] and confirmed by comparing with the authenticated specimens housed at Sri Krishnadevaraya University Herbarium, Anantapur, Madras Herbarium, Coimbatore and Central National Herbarium, Calcutta, Howrah.
The present study revealed the ethnomedical knowledge of gums used by the tribal people of Eastern Ghats of Andhra Pradesh. A total of 21 crude drugs belonging to 19 genera and 14 families were recorded from the study area. The species were enumerated in alphabetical order of scientific name followed by family name, local name, purpose of the use, and mode of administration. The collected crude drug information was cross-checked with available literature (Jain, 1991; Rao and Henry, 1996; and Kirtikar and Basu, 1935) [18-20]. The critical review of literature of the drugs revealed that the information on 13 crude drugs is hitherto not known to the science and the information was depicted in Tables 1 and 2. The family-wise analysis of drugs indicates that Anacardiaceae represented by 3 species followed by Fabaceae, Combretaceae, and Burseraceae by 2 species each while remaining 9 families represented by single species only.

By analyzing the present folklore information collected from tribes of Eastern Ghats, it was observed that people use different plant parts such as Lawsonia leaves, garlic, asafoetida, mustard seeds, pepper, ginger, and sesame oil and animal products such as honey and goat milk as ingredients along with gums to prepare herbal formulations. The local people use these formulations to cure 14 different human ailments prevailing in the study area. The disease-wise analysis of crude drugs indicates that contraceptive (5 species) is the most common disease in the area, followed by menorrhrea, dysentery, and ulcers (2 species) and remaining diseases represented by single species each only. The mode of drug administration by the local people revealed that there are 24 herbal formulations, commonly prepared by local people to cure 14 ailments, of which oral administration (13 formulations) is most common use of drugs, followed by external application (9 formulations). Some drugs used in different mode, for example, gum fumes of Boswellia ovalifoliolata used to cure postnatal complaints and Coccinia grandis gum applied as eye ointment for lacrimation.

Natural gums of plant origin have multifarious applications in pharmaceutical industry as drug delivery agents (Acacia), disintegrate in tablets (Sterculia), thickeners in oral liquids (Acacia and Mangifera), diluents, binders, gelling agents in gels (Butea, Neem, and Moringa), protective colloids in suspensions (Anogeissus), and bases in suppository (Choudhary and Pawar, 2014) [1] and mucilages as clarificants in local jiggery preparation (Chikkappaiah et al., 2017) [21]. The plant gums and latexes are good source of natural antioxidants (Tulasi et al., 2015) [22]. These natural materials have advantages over synthetic medicine as they are chemically inert, non-toxic, less expensive, biodegradable, and widely available. In view of the potential crude drugs with promising therapeutic properties used by the tribal people, there is an urgent need to take up them for the phytochemical and pharmacological investigations.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS
Authors are thankful to the authorities of Andhra Pradesh forestry for permission and help during explorations.

AUTHORS’ CONTRIBUTION
1st and 2nd authors, Dr. K. Venkata Ratnam and Dr. G. Tirupati Reddy, collected folklore uses of gums from tribal pockets of Eastern Ghats during their doctoral work and prepared MS.

3rd Author and corresponding author: Prof. R.R. Venkata Raju, Research supervisor for both 1st and 2nd authors and helped in MS correction.

Table 1: Systematic enumeration of crude drugs hitherto not known to Science

| S. No. | Plant name/family | Local name | Part used | Purpose | Mode of administration |
|--------|-------------------|------------|-----------|---------|-----------------------|
| 1      | Acacia nilotica/Mimosoideae | Nalia tamma | Gum | Contraceptive head | Gum applied on vaginal track to check conception |
|        |                   |            |           |         | Gum mixed with Lawsonia inermis leaves, ground, paste applied on forehead |
| 2      | Anogeissus latifolia/Combretaceae | Tirumanu | Gum | Menorrhoea | Gum dissolved in water and given orally for 3 days |
| 3      | Azadirachta indica/Meliaceae | Vepa | Gum/oil | Contraceptive | Genital tract is smeared with gum to check conception (or) one teaspoonful oil given orally once a day for a week |
| 4      | Bombax ceiba/Malvaceae | Buruga | Gum | Contraceptive | Gum mixed with honey in equal proportions and smearing the genital organ before conjugal union checks conception |
| 5      | Boswellia ovalifoliolata/Burseraceae | Kondasambrani | Gum | Postnatal complaints | Gum fired, smoke inhaled every day after 9 days of delivery |
| 6      | Buchanania axillaris/Anacardiaceae | China sarapappu | Gum | Rheumatism | Gum mixed with ash, garlic, asafoetida and made into paste with goat milk and applied externally |
| 7      | Butea monosperma/Fabaceae | Modaga | Gum | Contraceptive | Gum dissolved in warm water and given orally for 2-3 days |
| 8      | Chukrasia tabularis/Meliaceae | Adavivepa | Gum | Contraceptive | Gum smeared in the vagina to check conception |
| 9      | Coccinia grandis/Cucurbitaceae | Donda | Gum | Laximation | Fruit gum applied externally as eye ointment |
| 10     | Cochlospermum religiosum/Cochlospermacées | KondaGugu | Gum | Dysentery | Gum boiled in water and decoction given orally for 2 days |
| 11     | Ferula asafoetida/Apiceae | Ingava | Gum resin | Abortifacient | Gum resin along with equal parts of mustard seeds, ground, a teaspoonful of powder is given orally along with rice gruel for 3 days (3/4 months old pregnancy) |
| 12     | Mangifera indica/Anacardiaceae | Mamidi | Gum | Leucorrhoea | Gum along with pepper and ginger ground, boiled in water, extract given orally |
| 13     | Moringa oleifera/Moringaceae | Munaga | Gum | Ear pain | Gum heated with sesame oil, 3 to four drops poured into ears as ear drops |
Table 2: Systematic enumeration of gum crude drugs

| S. No. | Plant name/family            | Part used | Purpose            | Mode of preparation/administration                                      |
|--------|------------------------------|-----------|--------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1      | Bombax ceiba/Malvaceae       | Gum       | Menorrhea          | Gum dissolved in hot water given orally                                   |
| 2      | Boswellia serrata/ Burseraceae| Gum       | Skin eruptions     | Fresh gum resin applied externally                                        |
| 3      | Buchanania lanzan/Anacardiaceae| Gum       | Ulcers             | Gum dissolved in water and given orally                                   |
| 4      | Butea monosperma/Fabaceae    | Gum       | Chest pain         | Gum as external application                                               |
| 5      | Diospyros montana/Ebenaceae  | Gum       | Tuberculosis       | Gum dissolved in water; given orally                                       |
| 6      | Gardenia gummosa/Rubiaceae   | Gum       | Constipation       | Gum dissolved in warm water, given orally before bedtime                  |
| 7      | Pterocarpus marsupium/Fabaceae| Gum       | Toothache          | Gum as external application                                               |
| 8      | Shoreatumbuggaia/Dipterocarpaceae| Gum   | Ulcers             | Gum dissolved in water, given orally                                       |
| 9      | Sterculia urens/Sterculiaceae| Gum       | Dysentery          | Gum dissolved in warm water, given orally                                  |
| 10     | Terminalia bellirica/Combretaceae| Gum  | Urinary disorders  | Gum dissolved in water, given orally                                       |

CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS

The authors do not have conflicts of interests

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