

Studies of bio-diversity of medicinal plants and their prospects and problems in Tripura

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ABSTRACT

Our state is endowed with very rich flora and fauna and rich biodiversity, which is under increasing threat from biotic and abiotic factors. The agroclimatic conditions of Tripura favour the cultivation of diverse medicinal plants and is considered to be the hot-spot of medicinal plants and has in abundance, diverse range of herbs, shrubs, trees and vines that have important medicinal value whose healing properties are known to the local healers and practitioner. Tripura being one of richest centres of biodiversity, more than 270 species medicinal plants have been identified for their medicinal uses, which make Tripura a unique position in traditional systems of medicine. The indiscriminate collection of medicinal plants from nature led to depletion and extinction in many cases making them as rare endangered and threatened species. The threats to biodiversity conservation is due to deforestation, high population growth, urbanization, shifting cultivation, grazing, illegal extraction of medicinal plants, forest fires etc. This paper emphasizes the diversity and potentiality of medicinal plants as a medicinal value and the need for the documentation and their utilization for the greater benefits of mankind. Therefore, adequate endeavors are needed for conservation of such invaluable biodiversity and for their sustainable use.

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INTRODUCTION

Tripura have a large number of valuable naturally growing medicinal plants that are predominantly shared by rural poor and tribals communities. The agro-climatic conditions of Tripura favour the cultivation of different medicinal plants and the state is considered to be the hot-spot of medicinal plants. State has in abundance, a diverse range of herbs, shrubs, trees and vines that have significant medicinal value whose healing properties are known to the local healers and traditional doctors. Rural people suffering from common ailments like cold and cough, diarrhea, bronchitis, routine skin and eye irritations,

veterinary healers etc. Tripura being one of richest centre of biodiversity, more than 270 species of medicinal plants have been identified for their medicinal value (Das *et al.*, 2009; Das *et al.*, 2010). Out of 270 medicinal plants 255 medicinal plants have been listed in Table 1. In Tripura, medicinal plants are mostly found in hilly parts of Tripura and also found in homestead garden, road side, fallow land, waste land, forest land, agricultural fields and horticulture orchards without desired care and management. The demand of the medicinal plants are increasing day by day even in the home markets due to side effects of several allopathic drugs and development of resistance to currently used drugs for infectious diseases have led to increased emphasis on the use of plant materials as a source of medicines for a wide variety of human ailments. The parts used are seed, root, leaf, bark, fruit, flower, flower buds, stem, rhizome, bulb, tuber, wood or even whole plant. The major health problems among the peoples inhabiting interior areas of Tripura are malnutrition and the common diseases are diarrhea, malaria, gastroenteritis, leprosy, tuberculosis, eye diseases and various kinds of skin diseases. Ulcerous,

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