

Ethnobotanical studies on Thenmudiyanur Village, Thiruvannamalai district, Tamil Nadu, India

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SUMMARY

This study shows that knowledge and usage of herbal medicine for the treatment of various ailments among Thenmudiyanur villagers of Thiruvannamalai district, Tamil nadu, India. They use forest plants, weeds, fruit plants, vegetables, ornamental plants and much other as traditional medicine. The results of the present study provides evidence that medicinal plants continue to play an important role in the healthcare system of village community. Although many of these species are known as medicinal plants, others are mainly used for non-medicinal purposes such as preparing agricultural implements. The collection, identification and documentation of ethnomedicinal data on biological resources are inevitable steps for bioprospecting. These plants may serve as source of some important medicine against some major diseases. Therefore, these villager's claims should be further validated scientifically.

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Ethnobotanical study is of immense importance with medical science. Now it was well established branch of science with much attention. Globally, about 85% of the traditional medicines used for primary health care are derived from plants. Traditional medicine and ethnobotanical information play an important role in scientific research, particularly when the literature and field work data have been properly evaluated (Awadh *et al.*, 2004). India is one of the twelve mega-biodiversity countries of the World having rich vegetation with a wide variety of plants with medicinal value. In many countries, scientific investigations of medicinal plants have been initiated because of their contribution to healthcare. Herbal medicines have good values in treating many diseases including infectious diseases, hypertension, etc. That they can save lives of many, particularly in the developing countries, is undisputable (Patrick, 2002). Rural people not only depend on wild plants as sources of food, medicine, fodder and fuel, but have also developed methods of resource management, which may be fundamental to the

conservation of some of the world's important habitats (Gemedo-Dalle *et al.*, 2005).

Earlier studies showed that nearly one third of about 15000 higher plants species are used by tribals (Alagesaboopathi, 1999). India possesses a total of 427 tribal communities. Recently various ethnobotanical studies have been reported to expose the knowledge from the various tribals of Tamilnadu (Eluvakkal, 1991), (Venkatesan, 2004), (Sandhya *et al.*, 2006) and (Shanmugam, 2008). Each and every tribal uses certain plants as medicine. Documenting the indigenous knowledge through ethnobotanical studies is important for the conservation of biological resources as well as their sustainable utilization. It is also necessary to collect the information about the knowledge of traditional medicines, preserved in tribal and rural communities of various parts of India in general and Tamilnadu in particular before it is permanently lost.

Throughout the world, plants have been in continuous use in one way or the other for the treatment of various ailments. In India, the sacred Vedas, which date back between 3500 B.C. and 800 B.C., give many references of medicinal plants. The indigenous traditional knowledge of medicinal plants of various ethnic communities, where it has been transmitted orally for centuries is fast disappearing from the face of the earth due to the advent of modern technology and transformation of traditional

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