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Ethnomedicinal plants for evidence based health care from north-central Western Ghats of india

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Abstract

The documentation of medicinal plants and their medicinal value gives firsthand knowledge of health care system of the local community. The Western Ghats area is one of the 34 global biodiversity hotspots. Around 4000 species of flowering plants have been reported from Western Ghats, of which about 38% are used as medicine by local community.

The present study aims to document the ethnomedicinal plants of Belgaum region of Karnataka which is situated in North-West part of Karnataka state in southern India. The district spreads over an area of 13,415 sq.kms and divided in to 10 talukas. The district can be divided into three parts namely; hilly area, semi hilly area and plain. The average rain fall varies 350 mm to 1500 mm from plain areas to hilly region. Accordingly the vegetation type also varies from scrub jungles, Dry deciduous to Semi evergreen forest types respectively.

Around 121 traditional practitioners were interviewed personally and questionnaires were made to fill up. The major diseases treated by the Traditional practitioners are Bone fracture, Diabetes, Herpes, Jaundice, Kidney stone, Male and Female Fertility problems, Leucorrhoea, Menorrhea, Piles, Snake bite, etc. They also give treatment for the common diseases like Cough, Cold, Fever, Vomiting, Stomach ache, Mouth ulcers, Wounds, etc. Some of the Traditional Practitioners also "claim" effective treatments for the diseases like HIV and Cancer.

About 91 medicinal plant species belonging to 51 families used to cure 64 types of diseases. Trees are reported for maximum utility with 34.07% followed by herbs (32.97%), shrubs (20.88%) and climbers (12.09%).The aerial parts are used maximum (73.73%) followed by the underground parts (15.25%) and whole plant (4.24%). Among the aerial parts, leaf constitutes maximum usage (52.87%) followed by stem and bark (21.84%) and fruit (15.59%).