

Medicinal Plant Resources and Conservation of Nallamalais, Forest Range, Eastern Ghats, India

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Abstract : Nallamalas one of the centres of Plant Diversity (CPD) (WWF&IUCN,1995) is located in the central eastern Ghats between latitudes 15.20'-16.30'N and Longitude 78.30-80.10E in Andhra Pradesh, extended to an area of 7640 Sq.Km. No Comprehensive work available for RET Plants in the study area, therefore the objective of the present paper is to document the RET Medicinal Plants of Nallamalais and their uses by the local people of the area. In India, one of the major resources to know about the number of plant species and their medicinal values is the groups who are habituated in near and deep forests. The most common groups in south Indian forests are Yanadis and Yerukulas. These two groups of people are residing in the forest, which is located very far from the modern society, towns and cities. They are following traditional methods obtained from their forefathers in all respects, including medication. They are the only source to know many medicinal plants in the areas where they reside and are also important to record the medicinal properties of various plant species which are not reported. The new reports may help in drug industry in order to develop pharmaceutical herbal medicine for human health. In the present study, nearly 150 rare species have been found to be used for various ailments. Out of these 23 species are critically endangered, over 25 are vulnerable and around 22 comes under the category of near threatened. Some important species like *Christella dentate*, *Careya arborea* are used for curing cough and cold. *Piper attnuatum*, *piper nigrum* are used for curing skin disease. *Ipomoea mauritiana* is used against male impotency. *Glycosmis cochinchensis*, *Entada perseatha* are used as contraceptives. The roots of *Andrographis nallamalayana* and *Acrocephalus indicus* are used for leucorrhoea. While the stem barks of *Gyrocarpus americanus* is given orally for spider bite. *Piper hymenophyllum* leaves mixed with turmeric and gingerly oil is used externally for mouth ulcers in cattle. *Piper nigrum* fruits are used for skin diseases. *Vernonia anthelmentica* seeds are used for indigestion. It was widely distributed in this hills. Due to over exploitation this species was in declined condition. *Sterculia urens* which is a source of gum for tribal, due to over exploitation this species declaimed in these hills. Hence, there is an urgent need to conserve the medicinal plants and prevent their exploitation and extinction with the help of tribals. There is a need to adopt sustainable utilization, cultivation and micro propagation techniques. Medicinal plants are as potent and effective today as they were thousands of years ago. They are natures wonderful gift to mankind and are involved in India as a very rich ancient heritage of traditional systems medicine i.e., ayurveda, siddha and unani. Unfortunately, these traditions have been largely eroded because of lack of support and recognition as well as rapid destruction of natural habitats which has led to shrinkage of medicinal plants therefore the conservation of medicinal plants and the revitalization of local health traditions has been taken up on priority basis.

Keywords : RET plants CPD, IUCN, nallamalais, yanadis, yerukulas

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