

D-21 : A SURVEY OF MEDICINAL PLANTS IN RITIGALA AND ITS SURROUNDING PLAIN

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Ritigala is one of the hill ranges famous for medicinal plants. A survey was conducted to evaluate its medicinal plants and their uses. This survey was carried out in two stages. The first stage involved identification and collection of medicinal plants specimens in the area under the guidance of native physicians. The second stage involved a density survey of medicinal plants using three stage sampling theory.

The first stage revealed that there were 179 medicinal species in Ritigala and its surrounding plain. Of these 179 spp, 45% were found in Ritigala, 40% in its surrounding plains and 15% common in both areas. It was also revealed that 85% of the spp were of perennial type. The richest area for medicinal plants in Ritigala was Aushadakanda.

The highest number of medicinal plants found in this area were recorded as being used in treatment of muscular and skin diseases. The survey showed that 21% of the medicinal plants have antidote properties.

Second stage of this survey revealed that the medicinal plants density and the species density in the Ritigala strict natural reserve (SNR) were lower than in its surrounding plain. However the rare types were confined to the SNR.