

D-38 A preliminary investigation of uncommon uses of plants in indigenous/ayurvedic/folk-lore medicine in five villages of Sri Lanka

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A large proportion of the Sri Lankan population is dependent on the traditional herbal systems of medicine. Plants are used in the preparation of Ayurvedic formulations and some for minor folk-lore remedies. Many Western drugs have been extracted from plants used in folk-lore medicines. This survey was carried out to determine new uses of plants to treat specific diseases and ailments. The survey was carried out in the villages of Thalvehera, Polpithigama and Egodagama in the Kurunegala District and Sonuththara and Illukkumbura in Matale District, through interviews and discussions with practitioners of Ayurvedic/Indigenous medicine and rural folk.

The plants referred to by them were collected when available and their identification was verified. The plants are listed according to their uses for treating diseases or remedies. The new records either for plants or the uses may be placed in one of 4 categories: (1) those plants used due to mistaken identification of the traditionally recommended plants; (2) those used due to similarity in appearance to traditionally recommended plants; (3) those plants claimed to be effective and therefore used as substitutes for traditionally recommended plants; (4) those plants which are claimed to be effective but with no reference to the traditionally recommended plants.