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**Ethnobotanical survey on medicinal plants used in snake bite treatments in  
Western and Sabaragamuwa provinces in Sri Lanka**

G C Akalanka<sup>1</sup>, R G U Jayalal<sup>1</sup> and R M Dharmadasa<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Department of Natural Resources, Faculty of Applied Sciences, Sabaragamuwa  
University of Sri Lanka, Belihuloya*

<sup>2</sup> *Herbal Section Technology, Industrial Technology Institute, 363, Bauddhaloka Mawatha,  
Colombo 07*

Sri Lanka has a high snake diversity of which ninety six species are terrestrial. There are six species of land snakes that are considered to be highly venomous. More than 95% deaths occur due to snakebites of cobra (*Naja naja*), Russell's viper (*D. russelii*), and common krait (*B. caeruleus*) species each year in Sri Lanka. Traditional medical systems for snakebites developed over 3,000 years has been practiced for many centuries in Sri Lanka. Most of the treatment types and usage rely mainly on plant materials. However, available information on medicinal plants and other materials used in snakebite treatments are inadequate. This study was carried out to rectify the above by interviewing traditional snakebite practitioners living in the Western and Sabaragamuwa provinces using well-structured questionnaires. Plants were identified based on information available in classical texts and by comparing with herbarium specimens. Seventy four traditional practitioners, i.e 44 practitioners from Sabaragamuwa province and 30 practitioners from Western province were interviewed. A total of 341 different plant species belonging to 107 families were identified. The dominant plant families were Fabaceae (30 species) Euphorbiaceae (20) and Asteraceae (15). During the survey, different treatment types were identified for snakebites such as "Thaila" (oil), "Melluma" (cooked plant materials on a pan), "Pattu" (paste), "Pottani" (mixture of seeds/ plant materials heated by steam), "Guli" (pills), "Kendha" (congee), Steaming, Nasna (treatment for nose cavities), Anjanam (eye treatment) and decoctions. In the two provinces studied, a higher number of snakebites were recorded from the Sabaragamuwa province. Among highly venomous snakes hump nosed viper bites dominated in both provinces while cats snake dominated in the moderately and mildly venomous category.

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