Review of Literature
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In South India, Ethnobotanical studies were initiated by Janaki Ammal & Debadhas (1978). Ramachandran and Nair (1981a) conducted an ethnobotanical survey of Canannore district in Kerala and mentioned about 93 plant species used by different tribals. Ramachandran and Nair (1981b) studied ethnobotany of Irulas of Tamilnadu reporting about 138 plants used by them. The ethnobotanical data of the Todas, the Kotas and Irulars has been catalogued by Abraham (1981). Lakshmanan et al., (1986) accounted 41 plants used for various purposes by various forest dwellers of the Nilgiris.

They also studied ethnobotany of the Gowlis of Uttrakhand district, Karnataka (Bhandary et al., 1996). Balasubramanian and Prasad (1996a) have studied the ethnobotany and conservation of medicinal plants by Irulars of Nilgiris Biosphere Reserve and listed about 159 plants used by them; they have also studied medicinal plants among the Irulars of Attapadi Boluvampatti in the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve (Balasubramainan and Prasad 1996b). Hosagounder and Henry (1996) have dealt the ethnobotany of Kotas, Irulars, Kurumbas and Paniyans. The ethnobotany of Kattunaickens in Nilgiris district was studied by Cyril Nayagam (1998). Vijayakumar and Pullaiah (1998) enumerated some plants used by the tribals of Prakasam district for various purposes.


Ethnobotany of Coimbatore District.

There is no comprehensive account on the ethnobotany of Coimbatore District till today. While scrutinizing the existing literature reveals that there are a number of research articles published by them were general in nature. However a few research papers could tell us about the ethnomedicinal plants which are used by the tribals of Nilgiris Biosphere reserve area.

In Coimbatore district ethnobotanical studies have received due attention in the beginning of early eighties in twentieth century. Ramachandran and Nair (1981b) studied the ethnobotany of Irulars from Tamilnadu and included 88 species. Out of 88 species, only 57 species
reported from Coimbatore district. Sankaranarayanan and Lakshmanan (1982) presented medico-botanical studies in urbanizing village Veerapandipudur, Coimbatore, Tamilnadu. Lakshmanan and Sankaranarayanan (1988) conducted a survey on some folk-lore medicine in the remote hamlets Anaikatty hills of Coimbatore and provided information on medicinal plants. Kalyani et al., (1989) enumerated 66 species of medicinal plants which are present from Maruthamalai hills, Coimbatore district.

Ramachandran and Manian (1989) have dealt with the ethnobotany of Coimbatore district with references to Irulas, Koravas and Puliyas and enumerated 63 plants. Balasubramanian and Prasad (1996) have enumerated 63 medicinal plants used by Irulas of Attappady and Boluvampatti forest in the Nilgiris Biosphere reserve. Hosagoudar and Henry (1996) recorded 54 species of are used by Malasars, Muthuvens and Kadars of Anamalai from Coimbatore District, Tamilnadu. Balasubramanian and Prasad (1996) have studied the Ethnobotany and conservation of medicinal plants by Irulars of Nilgiris Biosphere Reserve, and listed about 159 plants used by them. Henry et al., (1996) have studied the Ethno medicobotany of the southern Western Ghats of India and listed about 125 plants used by Soliga, Paliyans, Irular, Kadar, Malasar and Kanikars. Srinivasan and Lakshmana Perumalswamy (1997) surveyed some medicinal plants of Maruthamalai hills, Coimbatore.

The perusal of the earlier ethno botanical work reveals that there is a scope to fill the gap on the ethno botanical studies on the Irulars from Coimbatore District. Since the Irulars are happened to be one of the dominant group within the community, who have inhabit the forest of Coimbatore district.