CHAPTER 5

AN EPILOGUE
Ethnozoological studies conducted among the South Indian tribes revealed that six out of nine tribes surveyed ('Kanikkaran', 'Paniyan', 'Palliyan', 'Sholaga', 'Irular' and 'Kota') have been using the termite O. formosanus Shiraki for the treatment of asthma, a disease associated with microbes. The 'Kanikkaran' and 'Palliyan' tribes have also been using the termite O. formosanus Shiraki as food to enhance lactation in women. Studies carried out to validate these tribal remedies support these remedial measures. Results on the antibacterial activity of O. formosanus Shiraki confirm the antimicrobial efficacy of the termite species, which the tribes are utilizing for the treatment of asthma. Similarly, the results on the dietary supplementation with the termite O. formosanus Shiraki to male and female Swiss albino mice M. musculus confirms the role of O. formosanus Shiraki on growth and reproduction. Studies on the antitoxic and antigenotoxic effect of the termite O. formosanus Shiraki besides its antibacterial potentialities highlight its importance in modern medicine.

High nutritive value of the termite coupled with its probable antitoxic and antigenotoxic role strongly suggests the possibility of termite as an alternative protein-rich viable feed particularly for poultry. Termites have not been exploited in a large way mainly because of the difficulty in harvesting large numbers and extracting them from the soil debris. As such, studies on termite culture on a commercial scale and its use as an alternative protein rich feed for poultry would probably go a long way. Also, further studies on the
compounds responsible for antibacterial activity, detoxification and antigenotoxicity besides the mechanism behind it would probably go a long way. Since the traditional knowledge of indigenous people throughout the world has played an important role in identifying natural resources worthy of commercial exploitation and the search for new pharmaceuticals from naturally occurring biological materials has been guided by ethnobiological data, the present results would bring much significance in modern medicine.