INTRODUCTION
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There has always been an undeniable interrelationship between man and his surroundings, the environment. This influence has played a vital role, directly or indirectly, in the evolution of human life and his culture. In the last two to three thousand years, man has been in search of easier and sound mode of life. Besides the three basic requirements of man viz., food, clothing and shelter, one needs a happy life free from worries. This is feasible only with disease free healthy body (Mishra and Naquvi, 1995).

Primitive people are closely associated with nature. They depend on it for their survival. The advancement of science and technology has disturbed the proximity between man and nature. However, the dependence of human beings on plants around them for survival goes on. This intimate relationship existing between the people of primitive societies and plants is the beginning of the ethnobotany.

The term Ethnobotany was first applied by Harshberger in 1895 to the study of “Plants used by primitive and aboriginal people....” (Anonymous, 1895) and it has been derived from the word, ethnic, which means classification of human beings into social and cultural groups (Singh, 2004). Initially this term referred to the study of plants used by primitive societies; but its scope has widened in recent years. Currently, this term is employed to include the total
relationship of plants and people (Jain and Mudgal, 1999) and is often enriched by the rich biodiversity coupled with ethnic diversity. Hough defined it as “the study of plants in their relation to human culture including psychological importance and mythological reference” (Ford, 1978).

Tribals are closely associated with plants and they possess good knowledge about plant resources in their vicinity. With the reach of civilization to the ethnic societies the traditional knowledge on the use of these plants is fast vanishing. There is an urgent need to document this knowledge, as otherwise it will be lost forever. The traditional systems of medicine are being practiced to achieve the elixir of youth and good health along with many indigenous methods. Ethnomedicine or the folk medicine is one of the ways, which is widely practiced among the tribals and aboriginal population of our country for treating ailments. Primitive societies have depended on herbal remedies for the treatment of diseases and disorders since time immemorial. All traditional systems of medicine had their root and origin in folklore medicine and even today large number of rural and tribal populations adopt herbal remedies for primary health care.

Plant medicines were regarded as highly important in the lives of our ancestors since they did not have any alternative therapy. Their dependence on the plants in their surroundings made them acquire the knowledge about the medicinal properties of many plants by trial and error. They were also aware of the commercial value of these plants. Consequently they became the custodians of knowledge of many useful as well as harmful plants, accumulated and enriched through generations and passed it from one generation to another, without any
written document (John Kennedy, 2003). Most developing countries are endowed with vast resources of medicinal plants. These plants have been used over the millennia for human welfare in the promotion of health. This close relationship between man and his environment continues even today as a large proportion of people in developing countries still live in rural areas.

According to a survey carried out by the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India, New Delhi for a period of ten years beginning from the late eighties to mid nineties there are over 8000 species of plants used as medicine by around 4600 ethnic groups including tribals, across the various ecosystems in the country.

The knowledge of the use of natural products such as plants amongst our people is truly phenomenal. The "All India Co-ordinated Research Project on Ethnobiology" of the Department of Environment reveals that the tribal communities alone have knowledge of the use of over 9,000 plant species. The Indian traditional medicine utilises over 7,500 species (Balasubramanian, 2000).

The poor and under-privileged masses of the remote areas have to fight many of the diseases on their own owing to the lack of necessary medical facilities. These communities depend upon folklore claims, as these medicines are locally and easily available to them (Kumar et al., 1993). Thus, these communities world wide, are well informed about plants and other natural resources, on which they are mostly dependent. Unfortunately, much of this wealth of knowledge is today becoming lost, as traditional cultures are uprooted. This disappearing knowledge is to be saved and made available to the local communities.
Ethnobotanists can play a very useful role in conserving the ethnobotanical knowledge as part of living cultural, ecological systems helping to maintain a sense of pride in local cultural knowledge and practice and reinforcing links between communities and the environment, so essential for conservation (Martin, 1995).

Millions of the people in the third world still use herbal medicines because they believe in them and regard them as their own system of medicine (Audichya et al., 1983; Austin and Bourne, 1992; Chawdhury, 1992). It has been estimated that 80% of people living in developing countries are almost completely dependent on traditional medical practices, for their primary health care needs. Many higher plants are known to be the main source of drug therapy in traditional medicine (Martini - Bettole, 1980; Farnsworth et al., 1985; Akerele, 1993; Anyinam, 1995; Martinez, 1995).

Recognition of traditional system of medicines owing to their time tested efficacy, without side effects and availability on low cost warrants the need for promotion of a symbiotic relationship between authenticated folk medicine and codified classical systems of today's medical practices. Inflationary trends in the cost of highly developed drugs by large pharmaceutical companies can also encourage the use of locally available natural products (Sharma and Sharma, 1999).

Folk medicines gain new importance as information on medicinal plants and folk drugs is subjected with renewed vigour for investigation in the search for new biodynamic compounds of potential therapeutic value (Singh and
Au, 1992; Whyte, 1992). Keeping in view the various side effects and other metabolic reactions caused by allopathic medicines, the Western countries are more inclined towards the use of herbal drugs, which are considered safe and with lesser side effects (Bhakuni, 1990; Goel and Aswal, 1990).

The various tribal sects of India are repositories of rich knowledge on various uses of plant genetic resources, which have hitherto remained unknown (Khoshoo, 1991). But of late, due to several developmental activities around tribal areas which are after all not related to their welfare, the tribal people are losing their traditional identity resulting in a good deal of loss of such treasure-house of knowledge on plant genetic resources (Shankar, 1995). In view of the harmful developments, the UN declared the year 1993 as the “International year of Indigenous People” based on the recommendations of the Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit. The studies on the relationship between the aboriginal or primitive people and their surroundings including a critical evaluation of some of the important plants used by the tribals have received considerable attention in recent years (Das et al., 1983).

It is a matter of great pride that among the 18 hot spots known for rich flora in the world, two are located in India. They are the Eastern Himalays and the Western Ghats (Khoshoo, 1996). The hill chain of Western Ghats recognized as a region of high level of biodiversity is under the threat of rapid loss of genetic resources (Gadgil, 1996). The biodiverse nature of the Eastern Ghats is meagre. A perusal of the available literature reveals that till date there is no comprehensive survey, documentation and enumeration of wild medicinal plants used by the tribe
Palliyars inhabiting the Grizzled Giant Squirrel Wildlife Sanctuary, Srivilliputhur located in the South-Eastern Slope of Western Ghats, Tamil Nadu. And hence, in the present study an attempt is made for the survey, documentation and enumeration of wild medicinal plants in the study area. The Palliyars are the dominant tribal group inhabiting this locality. The present study focuses on the dependence of the Palliyars on herbal medicines and attempts at an exhaustive analysis of the therapeutic values of such medicinal plants.

The Palliyars have so far asserted their ethnic identity and practiced the traditional ethnomedicine. This is a standing example of the dependence of tribal people on plants for their health care from time immemorial. If it is documented and intellectual rights are guaranteed to them, not only the Palliyars but also the whole nation would benefit.
Ethnomedicine – An Introduction

The history of ethnomedicine dates long back. Since very early days, the knowledge of ethnomedicine has been passed on from generation to generation among the tribals and it survived in certain restricted aboriginal habitations. Ethnomedicine deals with the study of plant derived galancial products and bioactive molecules used in primary health care based on the historical evidence of the value of such plants (Sharma and Sharma, 1999). The studies on ethnomedicine include location of the ethnic source, diseases for which plant part used, condition of plant part (fresh / dried) and mode of administration. The research on ethnomedicine started decades ago in many countries including India. More than 35,000 plant species are being used around the world for medicinal purpose both in traditional and ethnomedicinal practices (Van Seters, 1997). The literature on ethnomedicine is widely scattered.

Ethnomedicinal studies Abroad

Weiner (1970) reported about the use of 20 medicinal plants practiced by the local inhabitants in Namosi village, Fiji. Turner and Bell (1971) studied 39 plants belonging to 36 genera and 28 families used as medicine by the coast Salish Indians of Vancouver Islands. Weiner (1971) mentioned about 71 medicinal plants utilized by the people of Tonga. Prance (1972) described the preparation of a contraceptive by name Beku made from Curarea tecunarum by the tribe Denis of Amazonian Brazil. Turner and Bell (1973) documented 69
medicinal plants belonging to 61 genera and 30 families used to cure various ailments by the Southern Kwakiutl Indians of British Columbia. Uhe (1974) highlighted 154 medicinal plants used by the native people of Samoan Islands. Singh et al. (1979) enumerated 75 medicinal plants used in Nepal. Wilson and Mariam (1979) listed out 34 plant species used in native medicine to cure various diseases by the people living in Ethiopian Plateau.

Aldunate et al. (1983) reported about 37 plant species used to treat human ailments by the Pre-Altiplanic community in the Andes of Northern Chile. The Akhas tribe inhabiting the remote hills of Northern Thailand used 121 plants as medicine (Anderson, 1986a). Anderson (1986b) drew attention to 68 plants used by the tribe Lahus of Northern Thailand. Lentz (1986) mentioned about 11 plants used by the Jicaque or Tol (an Amerindian group) people residing in the Jicaque of Honduras. Abulafatih (1987) described the use of 61 medicinal plants utilized by the local inhabitants of South-Western Saudi Arabia. Mahunnah (1987) studied the use of 31 medicinal plants practiced by the Hayas inhabiting North-Western Tanzania. Manandhar (1987) reported about 68 plant species used as medicine by the inhabitants of Manang Valley in Nepal. Verzar and Petri (1987) noted about 15 plant species used as medicine by the Mamakua Negros and Bantu Negros of Mozambique.

Giron et al. (1991) drew attention to 119 medicinal plants used in native medicine by the Carib population inhabiting Guatemala, a polyethnical country in the heart of the Mesoamerican region. Manandhar (1991) enumerated about 95 medicinal plants belonging to 88 genera and 47 families commonly used
in the treatment of various ailments by the Tamangs, a tribe of Nepal. Abbas et al. (1992) mentioned about 52 medicinal plants belonging to 49 genera and 20 families, which are being utilized in the traditional medicine in Bahrain. Bhattarai (1992) documented 62 plant species used in the traditional phytotherapy by the local inhabitants of Jumla, Mugu and Kalikot districts of West Nepal. Ghazanfar and Al-Sabahi (1993) highlighted 35 native and cultivated medicinal plants used to cure various diseases by the local people inhabiting Northern and Central Oman, Arabia. Githinji and Kokwaro (1993) described 28 indigenous species belonging to Lamiaceae, which are popular among Kenyan herbalists inhabiting the Rift Valley and central parts of Kenya. Omino and Kokwaro (1993) mentioned about 25 species belonging to 16 genera of Apocynaceae, which are mostly used in curing skin diseases by the tribals of Kenya.

The tribe Hayas inhabiting the Kagera region in Tanzania used 31 herbals in traditional medicine (Chhabra and Mahunnah, 1994). Gill and Nyawuame (1994) reported about 103 leguminous plants used in ethnomedicinal practices of Nigeria. Johns et al. (1994) drew attention to 41 plant species used by the tribe Batemis of Tanzania to treat 58 ailments. Manandhar (1994) enumerated the ethnomedicinal use of 80 plant species belonging to 50 families by the local inhabitants of Kaski district, Nepal. Manandhar (1995) listed out 60 plant species used in local phytotherapy by the inhabitants of Jajarkot, a remote district of Nepal. Bustos and Espinar (1996) highlighted the medicinal use of 30 plants by the San Juan people in Argentina. Arenas and Azorero (1997) documented 22 medicinal plants used by ten ethnically different groups as antifertility agents to
avoid pregnancy. Dolores and Latorre (1997) described 101 plants (both flowering and non-flowering) used in native medicine by the Mexican Kickapoo Indians living in Mexico. Gill et al. (1997) mentioned about 39 plant species belonging to 20 dicot and 6 monocot families, which are used in the native phytotherapy by the Bini people of Nigeria. Gragson (1997) reported the use of 8 underground plant organs as medicine by the Pume Indians living in Venezuela. Novy (1997) mentioned the importance of 68 medicinal plants utilized by the Madagasy tribes Betsimisarakas and Tanalas inhabiting the Eastern Madagascar and South-Eastern Madagascar. Rahman (1999) made a mention of 52 medicinal plants used by the tribals viz., the Chakmas, Marmas, Tripuras, Murongs, Pangkhoas, Khumis, Bhomes, Chacks, Lushais, Ohisuis and Shautas inhabiting Chittagong, Bangladesh. Siwakoti and Siwakoti (1999) highlighted 122 medicinal plants belonging to 114 genera and 57 families used in native phytotherapy by the tribe Satars of Nepal. Grierson and Afolayan (1999) hinted about 38 medicinal plants belonging to 26 families, which are used by the traditional healers, the Sangomas inhabiting the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa.

Balick et al. (2000) mentioned the use of some medicinal plants by the Latino healers for women’s health care in New York City. Ivancheva and Stantcheva (2000) enumerated about 73 medicinal plants belonging to 30 families used by the local people of Bulgaria, South-East Europe. Pieroni et al. (2003) drew attention to 60 herbal remedies practiced by the Istro-Romanians, the smallest ethnic group in Europe. Guarrera (2003) recorded 126 entities distributed among 39 families employed by the local inhabitants of Central Italy, in folk alimentary
and/or therapeutic food uses. Ranjan (2003) documented 80 angiosperm plant species used by the Nepal tribes namely the Ojhas and Hakims to cure various human ailments. Ploetz and Orr (2004), based on a survey conducted from December 1998 to March 1999, stressed about the common use of 15 herbs throughout Bulgaria primarily for medicinal purposes (46%) by the local people.

**Ethnomedicinal studies in India**

Jain (1963) enumerated 27 medicinal plants utilized by the tribe Gonds of Madhya Pradesh to treat various diseases. Jain and Tarafder (1970) reported about 377 medicinal plants used by the Santals, one of the largest tribes of India inhabiting chiefly the Santhal Pargana district of Bihar and neighbouring districts in Eastern India in their indigenous medicinal system. Shah and Joshi (1971) mentioned more than 75 plants used as medicine by the Khasia Rajputs in the sub-montane and Bhotias in the montane of the Kumaon region of India. Jain *et al.* (1973) listed 32 medicinal plants belonging to 29 genera and 21 families of angiosperms, which are used in the treatment of various human ailments by certain Adivasis viz., the Chenchus, Reddis, Valmikis and Gonds in Andhra Pradesh and Soras and Kondh tribes in Orissa. Malhotra and Moorthy (1973) gave a list of about 126 herbal medicines used by the local inhabitants of Chandrapur district, Maharashtra. Chaudhuri *et al.* (1975) documented 34 medicinal plants used by the tribals in Orissa. Saxena and Dutta (1975) enumerated 69 medicinal plants used to treat various diseases by the tribals namely the Kondhs, Gonds, Santals, Saoras, Mundas, Kolhas, Shabars, Parojas, Gadabas and Kols inhabiting Orissa. Borthakur (1976) described the medicinal use of 43 plants by the tribe
Mikirs inhabiting Karbi-Anglong district in Assam. Chaudhuri and Tribedi (1976) hinted about 39 plant species used in local medicine by the inhabitants of 24-Parganas district, West Bengal. Bedi (1978) reported about 51 plants used by the tribe Bhils of Ratan Mahal and surrounding hills in Gujarat to treat various human maladies.

Jain and Dam (1979) made a mention of 16 medicinal plants for curing various ailments used by the local aboriginals viz., the Assameses, Abors, Arongs, Bengalis, Bhutias, Garos, Khasis, Miris, Mikirs and Nagas inhabiting North-Eastern India. Kumar et al. (1980) documented 54 medicinal plants used to treat various diseases by the tribe Garos inhabiting Balphakram Sanctuary in Meghalaya. The tribals of Eastern Rajasthan used 123 species of medicinal plants belonging to 104 genera and 54 families (Singh and Pandey, 1980). The tribe Mikirs living in Karbi-Anglong district in North-Eastern India used 18 medicinal plants to treat various diseases (Jain and Borthakur, 1980). The Khasi and Garo tribes of Meghalaya used 33 species of medicinal plants (Rao and Neogi, 1980).

Goel and Bhattacharyya (1981), based on information gathered from a traditional source from the village Bilari in Moradabad district, Uttar Pradesh, hinted about a very cheap and effective crude drug combination containing the seeds of *Althaea rosea* (L.) Cav., *Cichorium endivia* L., *Lallemantia royleana* Benth., *Ocimum canum* Sims. and fruit of *Solanum nigrum* L. to treat jaundice. The Adiyans, Kurichans, Chingathans, Kadors, Karimpalans, Kattunayakans, Kudiyas, Malayars, Mullas, Kurumbars, Paniyas and Uralikurumbars are the important tribes inhabiting Cannanore district, Kerala. Ramachandran and Nair (1981) had
undertaken extensive field trips in the tribal pockets of Cannanore district, Kerala and documented 36 medicinal plants. Bhalla et al. (1982) enumerated 98 medicinal plants used by the local inhabitants in Sagar district, Madhya Pradesh. Joshi (1982) made a mention about 34 plant species used by the tribe Bhils of Rajasthan to treat various diseases. Rao and Jamir (1982) highlighted the use of 51 medicinal plants by the tribe Aos in Nagaland. Yoganarasimhan et al. (1982) reported the use of 143 medicinal plant species by the local inhabitants in Tumkur district, Karnataka.

The tribe Onges of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands used 12 plant species as medicine (Bhargava, 1983). The tribals namely the Totos, Mechs, Modesias and Nepalese of West Bengal utilized about 56 plant species as medicine to treat various ailments (Das et al., 1983). Megoneitso and Rao (1983) hinted about the use of 62 medicinal plants by the Angami sub-tribe of Nagas in the southern part of Nagaland. Hazaribagh and Ranchi districts in Bihar are inhabited by a large number of tribes namely the Santals, Oraons, Mundas, Birhers, Bedia Mohatos, and Kumi Mahatos. They used about 74 plant species belonging to 61 genera and 33 families as abortifacient for the termination of unwanted pregnancy (Tarafder, 1983).

Baruah and Sarma (1984) reported about 25 plant species used by the tribe Boros in Assam to treat various human ailments. The inhabitants of Sind Valley, Kashmir used as many as 57 plant species belonging to 34 families as medicine (Dar et al., 1984). Jain (1984) enumerated the use of 26 plants by the local inhabitants of Morni and Kalesar hills of Ambala district, Haryana. Maheshwari and Singh (1984) drew attention to the use of 41 plant species by the
tribe Bhoxas in Uttar Pradesh to treat various ailments. Malhotra and Balodi (1984) stressed the use of 14 wild plant species by the tribe Joharis inhabiting Munsirai tehsil of Pithoragarh district (Kumaon). The Nayadis, one of the primitive hill tribes of Northern Kerala made use of 54 plant species to treat headache, fever, scabies, paralysis, rheumatism, cough and asthma (Prasad and Abraham, 1984). Pushpangadan and Atal (1984) by undertaking extensive field trips in the various pockets inhabited by the primitive tribals like the Cholanaikkens, Pathinaikkens, Paniyans, Kurumans, Irulars, Adiyans and Kurichans in the Western Ghats, Kerala have drawn attention to the medicinal use of 78 plant species. Pal (1984) documented 19 medicinal plants used by various ethnic groups viz., the Nishis, Apatanis, Hill-Miris and Adis inhabiting the hill regions of Sabansiri district, Arunachal Pradesh.

Shah and Gopal (1985) enumerated the use of 59 medicinal plants by the tribal inhabitants of North Gujarat. Pushpangadan and Atal (1986) listed about 68 medicinal plants employed by the inhabitants like the Pulayars, Kuravars, Vedars, Parayars and Nayadis in the Travancore region of Kerala. Baruah and Sarma (1987) highlighted the use of 44 medicinal plants by the tribes Boros and Ravas in Assam and the Apatanis, Monpas and Lepchas in Arunachal Pradesh, in the treatment of piles, rheumatism, jaundice, worm control and as purgative, abortifacient and blood purifier. The tribals of Sikkim made use of about 37 plant species as source of medicine to treat several ailments (Krishna and Singh, 1987). Various ethnic groups like the Bhotiyas, Joharees, Darnees, Chaudansees and Byansees inhabiting the Alpine regions of Kumaon used 55 plant species as
medicine to cure various ailments (Rawat and Pangtey, 1987). Srivastava et al. (1987) reported the use of about 54 plants in medicine by the tribals of Sikkim. Thothathri and Pal (1987) made a note of 7 plants used as medicine by the tribes Apatanis and Nishis inhabiting lower Subansiri district, Arunachal Pradesh. War Jaintias, a distinct tribe inhabiting in and around Sohkha village of Jaintia Hills in Meghalaya, utilized about 53 plant species as medicine (Kumar et al., 1987).

Balodi (1988) reported about the use of 5 medicinal plants by the tribe Bhotias inhabiting Gori Valley in Pithoragarh district of Kumaon division. Chakkrabarty and Rao (1988) enumerated about 12 medicinal plants used by the tribe Mongoloid Shompens inhabiting the Great Nicobar Islands. Das and Misra (1988) enumerated the use of 27 medicinal plants by the tribe Kondhs living in Koraput district, Orissa. Rai (1988) made a note of 27 plant species used by the tribes Bharias and Gonds in Chhindwara district, Madhya Pradesh. Among the 27 plants reported, 21 plants are used to treat skin diseases and 6 plants to treat liver disorders.

enumerated 19 plant species belonging to 14 families used as medicine by the tribals inhabiting Bankura district, West Bengal. Singh and Maheshwari (1989) reported about 40 plant species used by the tribe Tharus in Bahraich district, Uttar Pradesh for treating fever, malaria, dysentery, diarrhoea, skin diseases, boils, blisters, venereal diseases, rheumatism, inflammation, sprain, paralysis, leucoderma and fits. Gangwar and Ramakrishnan (1990) documented about 20 medicinal plant species used by the four tribal communities viz., the Nishis, Hill Miris, Sulungs and Apatanis inhabiting the Lower Subansiri district, Arunachal Pradesh. Paliwal and Badoni (1990) reported the use of 170 plant species in medicine by the tribes Garhwalis and Bhotias in Uttar Kashi. Rao and Jamir (1990) listed about 22 plant species used as medicine by two distinct Naga tribes viz., Aos and Angamis inhabiting Nagaland. Verma and Pandey (1990) enumerated 32 plant species used by the tribals Mundas and Oraons in Maidanpat and adjoining areas of Lohardaga district, Bihar to treat various diseases.

Aminuddin and Girach (1991) reported 29 plant species used by the tribe Bondos, one of the most primitive tribes of India inhabiting Koraput district, Orissa for curing various diseases. Awasthi (1991) hinted about 20 plant species used by the tribe Great Andamanese of Negrito Islands for curing several diseases. Hembrom (1991) made a note of 24 medicinal plants used by the tribals in Chotanagpur and Santhal Parganas of Bihar for curing ailments like polio, asthma, tuberculosis, epilepsy, cancer and leprosy. Kapur (1991) documented 78 plant species belonging to 71 genera and 46 families used as medicine by the tribes Gujjars, Bhakarwals and Gaddhis inhabiting Dudu Valley, Jammu. Prakash and
Mehrotra (1991) listed out 20 plant species commonly employed in medicine by the tribe Garos inhabiting Rongrengiri area and Garo hill district of Meghalaya. Rao and Haridasan (1991) mentioned the use of 81 medicinal plants by the tribes Khasis, Garos and Jaintias inhabiting Meghalaya, Aos and Angamis inhabiting Nagaland and Manipuris of Manipur in the treatment of different maladies. Sadhale et al. (1991) reported 43 plant species used as medicine by the native tribals of Ajiwali village in Pune district, Maharashtra for curing various ailments.

Chauhan and Bhattacharya (1992) drew attention to the use of 19 plant species as medicine by the inhabitants of Pokhari Block, Chamoli district in Garhwal Himalaya. Dwivedi and Pandey (1992) enumerated 30 herbaceous plant species as medicine to treat various diseases by the tribals and backward class people of Vindhya Plateau, Madhya Pradesh. Girach (1992) described 51 plant species used to treat 13 different diseases including gynaecological and sexual disorders, skin diseases, gastro-intestinal disorders, insomnia, paralysis, hydrocele, insanity, rheumatism / inflammation and bone fracture by the tribe Kondhs inhabiting Phulbani district, Orissa. Mishra et al. (1992) documented 19 plant species used by the Adivasis and local people inhabiting Ajmer Forest Division of Rajasthan for treating their ailments. Ravisankar and Henry (1992) made a mention about the use of 23 plant species in medicine by five different tribals viz., the Gonds, Kolams, Lambadis, Naikpods and Pardhans inhabiting Adilabad district in the northern most part of Andhra Pradesh. Sikarwar and Kaushik (1992) highlighted 15 tree species used to cure various disorders by the tribe Sahariyas inhabiting Morena district, Madhya Pradesh. Singh and Maheshwari (1992)
enumerated new or less known medicinal uses of 30 plant species by the tribe Tharus in Gorakhpur district, Uttar Pradesh. Thakur et al. (1992) mentioned about 32 medicinally important plants utilized by the local people inhabiting different villages of Madhubani district, Bihar for treating some common ailments like cold, cough, fever, diarrhoea, dysentery, vomiting, cholera, jaundice, malaria, snake-bite, leprosy, genital disorders etc.

The tribe Korkus inhabiting Melghat region in Amravathi district, Maharashtra used 11 plant species as medicine (Badhe and Pande, 1993). Borthakur (1993) described the medicinal use of 34 plant species by the ethnic groups namely the Bodos, Rabhas, Mishings, Karbis, Tai Ahoms and Dimasus of Assam to treat various diseases of children (13 plant species) and women (21 plant species). Gaur and Singh (1993) enumerated as many as 60 plant species used by the tribes Gujjars and Gaddies in Mandi district, Himachal Pradesh to treat various disorders. Hosagoudar and Henry (1993) reported 13 angiosperms and 2 pteridophytes used by the tribe Soligas settled in the southern part of Karnataka, to treat reproductive ailments and for birth control. Kumar et al. (1993) documented 15 medicinal plants used by the tribes Gujjars and Bakarwals inhabiting Jammu region. Shankar et al. (1993) gave a list of 35 plant species used as medicine by the tribals Idu Mishmis, Digora Mishmis and Padams inhabiting Dibang Valley, Arunachal Pradesh. Siddiqui and Husain (1993) drew attention to 36 plant species belonging to 31 genera and 27 families of angiosperms used in the treatment of gonorrhoea by the herbalists and old villagers inhabiting the Central Uttar Pradesh. Singh and Prakash (1994) enumerated 38 ethnomedicinal plants traditionally used
by the tribe Gonds living in Sonbhadra district, Uttar Pradesh for treating various diseases. The tribe Kadars in Anamalai Hills, Coimbatore district, Tamil Nadu used 31 plant species for treating various diseases (Rajendran and Henry, 1994).

Bhandary et al. (1995) described 98 medicinal preparations involving 69 plant species used by the tribe Siddis settled in four North-Eastern taluks of Uttara Kannada district in the Western Ghats, Karnataka. Chandra (1995) made a mention about 34 plant species used by the tribe Oraons in Palamau district, Bihar to treat diabetes, leucorrhoea, rheumatism, syphilis, tonsilitis, dismenorrhoea and as antifertility agents. Girach and Aminuddin (1995) highlighted new or less known medicinal uses of 46 plant species by the tribe Hos in the Singbhum district, Bihar. Jain (1995) hinted about the diverse medicinal use of 31 species belonging to 8 genera of the family Zingiberaceae by various tribal groups in India. The tribe Tharus inhabiting Nainital district, Uttar Pradesh used 179 plant species as medicine (Pant and Pandey, 1995). Rawat et al. (1995) enumerated 50 plant species used as medicine by the tribal communities like Adis, Apatanis, Hill Miris, Idu Mishmis, Monpas, Nishis and Noctes settled in Arunachal Pradesh to treat a number of ailments viz., fever, malaria, pneumonia, hypertension, cough, urinary complaints, venereal diseases, syphilis, labour pain, stomach disorders, worm infestation, dysentery, diarrhoea and skin diseases. Sahoo and Mudgal (1995) gave importance to less known uses of 23 plant species belonging to 21 families practiced by the various tribals inhabiting Phulbani district, Orissa in the treatment of amenorrhoea, dysmenorrhoea, dysuria, gonorrhoea, leucorrhoea and spermatorrhoea. Tiwari (1995) documented 25 plants used as ethnomedicine by
the tribe Halbis inhabiting the Chandrapur and Gadchiroli districts, Maharashtra for treating various diseases.

Dagar and Dagar (1996) highlighted the medicinal use of 44 plant species belonging to 41 genera and 29 families by the Nicobarese aboriginals, inhabiting Car Nicobar Island. Mohanty et al. (1996) documented 49 plant species used as medicine to treat diarrhoea by the tribals Saonas and Kondhs in Phulbani and Ganjam districts, Orissa. Radhakrishnan et al. (1996) listed out the ethnomedicinal use of 17 less known plants by the various tribal sects of Kerala. Rao et al. (1996) mentioned the use of 27 plant species practiced in dental care by the tribals viz., the Yanadis, Nakkalas, Yerukalas, Koyas and Kattunayakas inhabiting the Tirumala hills, Andhra Pradesh. Rawat et al. (1996) stressed the medicinal use of 24 plant species by the tribe Idu-Mishmis inhabiting Dibang Valley district, Arunachal Pradesh for treating various ailments like fever, malaria, skin diseases, cough, headache, constipation, healing of wound, tooth and chest pain, back-ache and as appetizers. Rawat et al. (1996) dealt with 24 medicinal plants used by the tribe Adis inhabiting the East and West Siang districts of Arunachal Pradesh.

Arshad et al. (1997) documented 51 plant species belonging to 29 families from the Cholistan desert lying in the south of Punjab used by the local inhabitants in their native medicine. Das (1997) enumerated 89 plant species used to treat various ailments by the tribes Minas, Bhils, Sahariyas or Sehrias inhabiting Karauli and Sawai Madhopur districts, Rajasthan. Tribals namely the Bhumij, Kols, Mundas and Santals in Bhadrak district, Orissa used 23 plant species as
medicine for treating various ailments (Girach et al., 1997). Singh et al. (1997) gave a list of 30 plant species belonging to 29 genera and 18 families used by the Tripuri tribes namely the Debbarmans, Reangs, Jamatias and Naotias in Tripura for treating piles, cough, cold, cut / wound and injury, dysentery, fever, gastric problem, hypertension, intestinal troubles, menstrual disorder, mental disorder, muscular pain, skin diseases, stomachache, swelling, toothache etc. Sen and Batra (1997) dealt with the use of 65 medicinal plants belonging to 40 families in 46 household remedies by the Bramhabhattas and Gurjar communities in Rajasthan. Rawat et al. (1997) hinted about 29 medicinal plants used by the tribe Monpas inhabiting Tawang district, Arunachal Pradesh.


The tribe Onges of Little Andaman Island used 11 plant species as medicine to cure various diseases (Awasthi and Goel, 1999). Arya and Prakash (1999) enumerated 22 plant species used as medicine by the mixed tribal population of Bhutias known as the Bhimas, Harkotyas, Martolias and Khalijhunias in Bageshwar district, Uttar Pradesh. Alagesaboopathi and Balu
(1999) described the unreported medicinal uses of 10 species of Andrographis by the tribals viz., the Kadars, Malayalis, Iurlars, Todas, Kotas, Gowdas, Badagas and Kurumbas of Tamil Nadu. Alagesaboopathi et al. (1999) hinted about 23 plant species used for treating various ailments by the tribe Malayalis in the Shevaroy hills in Salem district of Eastern Ghats, Tamil Nadu. Balu et al. (1999) stressed the medicinal importance of 30 plant species used in the treatment of diabetes by the tribals and non-tribals inhabiting the Cauvery delta of Tamil Nadu. Banerjee (1999) made a mention about 32 tree species used as medicine by the tribe Santals inhabiting twenty villages in Birbhum, West Bengal. Bhatt et al. (1999) listed about 54 plant species used as medicine by the tribes Bharwards, Rabaris, Kolls and Harijans inhabiting the Shetrunjava hill in Bhavnagar district, Gujarat. Bora (1999) enumerated new or less known medicinal use of 34 plant species by the tribe Bodos in Sonitpur district, Assam. Dagar and Dagar (1999) described the medicinal use of 4 species of pteridophytes, 1 species of gymnosperm, 53 species of dicots and 9 species of monocots, which have been used to treat gynaecological, urino-genital and other related problems by the aborigines of Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

Dash and Misra (1999) highlighted the medicinal use of 65 plant species in the treatment of 22 diseases by the tribes Baidas and Majhis in the Narayanapatna hills of Koraput district, Orissa. Tribes namely the Bathuris, Bhumijs, Kols, Mundas and Santals in Bhadark district, Orissa used 38 plant species as medicine to treat various skin diseases (Girach et al., 1999). Jadeja (1999) reported 38 plant species used as medicine by the tribe Rabaris of Barda

Garg (2000) dealt with more than 100 plants belonging to 36 families used as antidote for snake-bite by the rural and tribal people of different parts of India. Khanna and Kumar (2000) gave a list of about 50 plants known to cure various human ailments practiced by the tribe Gujjars in Saharanpur district, Uttar Pradesh. Kshirsagar and Singh (2000a) mentioned about 33 plants used for curing 24 different types of ailments by the tribe Malekudiyas in Coorg district, Karnataka. The tribe Jenukurubas inhabiting Mysore district, Karnataka used 25 plants as medicine to treat different ailments (Kshirsagar and Singh, 2000b). The tribals namely the Mikirs, Miris, Abors etc., and some non-tribals living in North-East India employed about 119 plant species as medicine for treating various disorders (Islam, 2000). Maiti and Manna (2000) studied the ethnomedicinal use of some herbal medicines to control fertility, by the tribe
Santals inhabiting Puruliya district, West Bengal. Maiti and Mishra (2000) laid
stress on 13 plant species possessing anti-venom property among the tribal
communities, the Mundas, Savas, Santals and Lodhas in West Bengal. Mukherjee
et al. (2000) documented 44 plant species used to treat 23 common diseases like
dysentery, fever, stomachache, snake-bite, rheumatism etc., by more than 10 ethnic
communities inhabiting Bankura district, West Bengal. Silori and Rana (2000)
made a report of about 34 medicinal plants used in curing various diseases by the
local inhabitants of Narayan Sarovar Sanctuary in the arid district Kachchh in
Gujarat. Upadhyay and Chauhan (2000) reported about 28 plant species used by
the tribe Koyas in Andhra Pradesh for treating different ailments.

Girach (2001) documented 27 medicinally important plants used by
the tribe Saoras inhabiting Mahendragiri hills (Eastern Ghats) in Gajapathi district,
Orissa. Gogoi and Borthakur (2001) mentioned about 69 herbal recipes for 27
ailments such as arthritis, pain, fractured bone, cholera, conjunctivitis, common
cold, cough, diarrhoea, dry cough, dysentery, eczema, fever, gastric disorder,
jaundice etc., involving 68 plant species used by the tribe Bodos inhabiting
Goreswar, Rangia and Jajikona development blocks in Kamrup district, Assam.
Jain and Patole (2001) listed out 38 plant species used for treating various
maladies by the tribals, Korkus, Gonds, Bharias and Mabasis inhabiting Pachmarhi
forest in Madhya Pradesh. Rao and Pullaiah (2001) drew attention to 50 selected
species of wild plants, which are used as medicine by the tribals viz., Chenchus,
Yerukalas, Yanadis and Sugalis inhabiting the forests in Guntur district, Andhra
Pradesh. Sharma et al. (2001) reported 27 plant species used against various
diseases by the tribe Bodos of Nalbari district, Assam. Sharma and Singh (2001) documented 51 plant species used by various ethnic sects viz., the Warlis, Konkanas, Dhodias, Dubalas, Katkaris, Naikas and Kolis living in Dadra and Nagar Haveli for treating nearly about 37 ailments.

Arya (2002) highlighted the traditional use of 19 medicinal plants by the local inhabitants of Dronagiri, a mythic hill in Almora district, Uttarakhand. Rajendran et al. (2002) dealt with the medicinal use of 36 plant species belonging to 24 families of flowering plants by the tribe Valayas inhabiting Seithur hills of Virudhunagar district, Tamil Nadu. The indigenous communities inhabiting Mirzaguda village in Renga Reddy district, Andhra Pradesh used 59 plant species belonging to 37 families in their primary health care (Ramachandra Reddy and Rao, 2002). Sashikumar and Janardhanan (2002) gave a list of 24 species belonging to 16 families, which are used in womenfolk’s health care by the tribals viz., Irulars, Kurumbars and Paniyans inhabiting the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve, Western Ghats. Uniyal et al. (2002) reported 85 medicinal plants used by the local inhabitants in the upper catchment of river Bhagirathi, Garhwal Himalayas.

The tribe Nishis of Arunachal Pradesh used 27 plants as medicine (Bhuyan, 2003). Baragali et al. (2003) documented 22 medicinal plants used to treat some common ailments by the local inhabitants of Jagdalpur district in Chhattisgarh. Das and Sharma (2003) mentioned about 47 vascular plants used to cure diseases such as fever, jaundice, dysentery, diarrhoea, toothache, cancer, sore, wounds, skin diseases etc., by the Manipuri and Barman communities inhabiting Cachar district, Assam. Ganesan and Kesavan (2003) enumerated the medicinal
use of 84 angiospermic plant species belonging to 82 genera and 40 families by
the ethnic group, the Valayans inhabiting Vallimalai hills, Tamil Nadu in their
phytotherapy to treat various ailments like wounds, cuts, stomach pain, diabetes,
fever, eczema, dandruff, cold, body heat, poisonous bites etc. Gogoi et al. (2003)
mentioned the use of 74 plant species belonging to 67 genera and 42 families in
the herbal medicine by the local people in Chandrapur area of Kamrup district,
Assam. Islam and Jha (2003) documented 83 plant species belonging to 77 genera
and 41 families used to treat 57 common diseases by the tribes viz., Oraons,
Mundas, Karmalis, Mahalis, Birhors, Kondhs, Bedias and Asurs inhabiting Ranchi
district, Jharkhand. The tribals Mundas and Asurs inhabiting Neterhat Plateau,
Chhotanagar and Singhbum districts in Jharkhand employed 19 plant species in
phytotherapy (Jain, 2003).

Jain et al. (2003) documented 39 plant species used by the tribes
viz., Kumars, Oraons and Gonds inhabiting Raipur district, Chhattisgarh for
mentioned about 27 plant species employed in the treatment of snake, scorpion and
insect bites / stings by the tribe Irulars inhabiting the Siruvani hills, a part of
Western Ghats in Coimbatore district, Tamil Nadu. Kemp (2003) reported 9 plant
species used as the herbal medicine by the tribe Rengas of Dimapur district,
Nagaland. The tribes Lepchas and Nepalese inhabiting North Sikkim employed 21
flowering plants as native medicine (Maity et al., 2003). Nonhare et al. (2003)
reported the ethnomedicinal properties of 56 plant species used by the tribes Gonds
and Halbis of Bastar district in Chhattisgarh. Sahoo and Bahali (2003) hinted about
24 plant species used by the tribes Kondhs, Gonds, Kutiakondhs and Sauras inhabiting Phulbani district in Orissa for treating several ailments. The tribe Reangs of North Tripura used 34 medicinal plants belonging to 27 families to cure various ailments (Shil and Sharma, 2003). Singh et al. (2003) listed 74 medicinal plants used by the tribes viz., Mikirs, Nagas, Manipuris, Apatanis and Garos inhabiting the North-Eastern states for treating some common diseases like malaria, diarrhoea, dysentery, skin diseases, jaundice, arthritis, venereal diseases etc.

Chhetri (2004) stressed the medicinal importance of 37 plant species belonging to 29 families used as antipyretic agents by the traditional healers of Darjeeling Himalayas. Ganesan et al. (2004) documented 34 plant species used to cure various ailments like rheumatism, headache, wounds, eczema, boils, cracks on heals, mouth ulcer, fever, dysentery, menstrual complaints, venereal diseases etc., by the tribes inhabiting the lower Palni hills, Tamil Nadu in their native medicine. Gupta et al. (2004) drew attention to 11 plant species of angiosperms practiced in traditional medicine by the tribe Nicobaris inhabiting Car Nicobar Island. Misra (2004) described the therapeutic use of seeds of 33 plant species employed by the tribals viz., the Mundas, Kondhs, Gonds, Binjals, Mirdhas, Bhumias and Sauras inhabiting the Gandhamardha hill range in Orissa.