

in the interior forest, some plants are cultivated by these tribes for their medicinal value. Wide variety of plants can be seen growing as weeds in the large open area in the center of each village. During the study, eleven plant species with their local names, most commonly used by the local tribes have been enumerated (Table 1). To ensure authenticity of the results, plants which were in flowering or fruiting stage at the time of data collection were recorded (Plate 1 & 2).

Discussion

The Nicobarese tribes are the reservoir of vast knowledge. They have been using medicinal plants for the treatment of various diseases since ages. Although few of the traditional healers have informal apprentices, very little of this knowledge is documented. The Island is passing through a transitional phase due to recent changes in the socio-economic set up and youths are also getting attracted toward the influence of outside world. This wealth of undocumented information is likely to be lost in near future if timely efforts are not taken. Attempts have to be made to analyze the scientific basis of this indigenous knowledge by encouraging pharmacochemical studies of the documented species. Although some of the species enlisted are already known for their medicinal use, some of them still remain unknown. These tribes must be encouraged to cultivate the promising species in large scale for their economic upliftment and betterment of the society.

Acknowledgement

Authors are thankful to Dr. P. K. Hajra for identification of the plant specimens. We are also thankful to Andaman and Nicobar Forest Department for providing logistic support and staff during fieldwork. We duly acknowledge the Botanical Survey of India, Andaman and Nicobar Circle for permitting us library and herbarium consultation.

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