

## Book Review

**FOLK MEDICINE OF THE NILGIRI HILLS IN SOUTHERN INDIA** by Dr. S. Rajan and M. Sethuraman, Published by Survey of Medicinal Plants & Collection Unit, Emerald and Hill Area Development Programme, Udthagamandalam; 2008, Hard bound, coloured book, pp XIV+376, Price Rs. 750.00.

The Nilgiri hills has more than 3000 species of plants, out of them more than 1000 species are endemic to this region and this areas comes under the Western Ghat, one of the hotspot of India. It is the home of more than 10 ethnic groups. This book is written on folk medicines of *Irulas* and *Paniyas* tribes of Nilgiri hills. The book comprises seven chapters. The introduction chapter has described ethnobotany and its all most all aspects in Nilgiri hills, viz. biogeography, flora, fauna, tribes, culture, traditional medicinal practices, bio-prospecting, etc. The chapter two and three are dedicated to landmarks in Indian ethnobotany and study methodology of ethnobotany, respectively.

The section under Phytomedicines is described in more than 250 pages, it is the main part of the book, full of coloured photographs of plants and animals. This chapter has mentioned about 227 plants and 29 animals, which are used in indigenous medicines. The description of each species includes updated botanical name with synonyms (if available), family, tribal names, common names, distribution, parts used, medicinal use, remedy preparation methods and dosage. The distribution of species is given on global level, it is a special feature of this book. A separate section of zoomedicines is provided with coloured photographs.

Under chapter five an analysis of phytomedicines and zoomedicines of *Irulas* and *Paniyas* tribes with some useful lists plants and animals are provided. This section also includes lists of common species used by both tribes, plants used by both the tribes for same disease and different diseases, magico-religious plants, remedy preparation methods, plant parts used, exotic plants, biodynamic use of the studied plants, new species recorded during present investigation and enlisting of rare, endangered and threatened species for conservation point of view. In next chapter, discussion on medical anthropology and cross-cultural studies on plants and animals used by indigenous people in remedy preparation are summarized in tabular form under table 6:4 and 6:5. In the last chapter major findings are compiled and enlisting of disease wise use plants and animals are given. The book is appended with over 250 quality coloured photographs. It would be an aid to recognise the plant by even non-botanist in field. In last 30 pages, indexes to botanical names, zoological names, vernacular names and edible plants are given. This information is reader friendly, which helps them to find desired information in short time.

Overall, it is an excellent book and very useful for academicians and researchers working in various disciplines including ethnobotany, pharmacogony, pharmacology, phytochemistry, herbal drug industry and environmental science.

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