

Ethno-medicinal Plants of India, Thailand and Vietnam

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ABSTRACT India and South-East Asia are wonderful laboratories for Anthropological and Ethno-botanical studies. The objective of this paper is to examine the ways in which thirty common medicinal plants are used in Western India, in the Northern Provinces of Thailand and in Viet Nam. In this research, the primary data was collected by the author from India and Thailand and this information was compared with secondary data obtained from a WHO regional publication executed in conjunction with the Institute of Materia Medica in Hanoi, Viet Nam. This pictorial scientific book consisting of 410 pages is entitled, "Medicinal Plants in Viet Nam". In this research a random study of 30 plant species were selected for study. The three most common diseases, ailments or conditions cured by the same 30 plant species in the three countries are as follows: Anthelmintic, Antipyretic and Rheumatism in India; Flatulence, Antipyretic and Skin diseases in Thailand and Diarrhea, Cough and Antipyretic in Viet Nam. This shows that in all the three areas studied, Antipyretic, or a substance to reduce fever was the most common. It is also interesting to note that the traditional healers in their respective countries reported that of the 30 species studied, they could cure 281 diseases or ailments in India, 163 diseases or ailments in Thailand and 298 diseases or ailments in Viet Nam. The scope for further research is incredible and the need for a global movement for the conservation of medicinal plants and the revitalization of the native health traditions of local communities is vital.