

Biographical Characteristics of Medicinal Plant Sellers in Northern KwaZulu-Natal

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ABSTRACT This study was carried out to profile medicinal plant sellers in northern KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa on the basis of selected biographical characteristics. A survey research design was followed, utilizing a questionnaire as the main data collection instrument. Altogether, 56 medicinal plant sellers participated in the study. The results showed that the medicinal plant selling business was dominated by middle-aged to elderly women about forty percent of whom had no basic schooling. All the respondents had dependents to support, and depended on this trade to support their families. The low education levels of the majority of the respondents are worrisome and pointed to a need for capacity building, particularly with regard to responsible harvesting, wastage and business skills. Further, most respondents lacked alternative opportunities for a livelihood due to a lack of training for anything else. Thus, they almost exclusively depended on the sale of medicinal plant products.