

Identification of medicinal plants with their potential pharmacological action in Kaithady, Jaffna, Sri Lanka

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Siddha Medicine is one of the most ancient medical systems of Sri Lanka. According to Siddha system of medicine, the geographical lands are divided into five divisions known as 'nilam'. They are mountain range – 'kurinchi', pastoral region of the forest – 'mullai', the fertile land – 'marudham', the coastal region – 'neidhal' and the arid-desert – 'paalai'. The objective of the study is to identify medicinal plants in Kaithady, Jaffna, and report their potential pharmacological actions. This area includes coastal and fertile regions. The Kaithady map was used to locate and count the medicinal plants. The samples collected from the field were authenticated and verified in herbarium Unit of Siddha Medicine. The research was carried out from June 2021 to September 2021. A total of 113 medicinal plants species belonging to 44 families were identified. This comprises of fertile land medicinal plants (76.11%), coastal regional medicinal plants (7.96%), and medicinal plants that are found in both fertile and coastal regions (15.93%). The pharmacological actions of the medicinal plants, with the counts, are as follows; tonic (36), astringent (25), diuretic (22), vermifuge (18), alterative (16), stimulant (16), cooling (15), expectorant (15) and demulcent (12). Considering the therapeutic use, 37 out of 113 identified medicinal plants were used to treat 'vatha' disease, 26 for respiratory diseases, 23 for skin diseases, 09 for diabetes mellitus and 07 for pediatric diseases. Out of these varieties, *Vernonia zeylanica* was identified as an endemic medicinal plant in Sri Lanka. Improperly planned cleaning of the bushes for various development schemes and over collection of medicinal plants due to the huge demand prevailing in the local markets may result in destruction of the natural habitats of these important medicinal plants.

Keywords: Kaithady, Medicinal plants, Pharmacological action

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