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# Journal of Threatened Taxa

Building evidence for conservation globally

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## BOOK REVIEW

### COMPENDIUM OF TRADED INDIAN MEDICINAL PLANTS

Reviewed by A. Rajasekaran

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## COMPENDIUM OF TRADED INDIAN MEDICINAL PLANTS

Reviewed by A. Rajasekaran

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Use of plants as a source of medicine has been an ancient practice and is an important component of the health care system in India. The traditional practitioners sustainably utilized the medicinal plants for various formulations with high degree of accuracy. However, the resurgence of global interest in herbal based health care has brought about a shift in preparation of herbal health care products on industrial scale involving high volume trade of many medicinal plants. In this context, there is a need for clear understanding on the sources of species under trade and their scale of demand and supply. The book titled “Compendium of Traded Indian Medicinal Plants” by K. Ravikumar, S. Noorunnisa Begum, D.K. Ved, J. R. Bhatt and G. S. Goraya, (2018) is fascinating and concise, though comprehensive information on the traded Indian medicinal plants.

Herbal raw drugs are generally traded using local trade name or vernacular names (but the use of trade / vernacular names to identify) plant taxa traded in herbal medicine markets is unreliable as they vary considerably from place to place and even between traders within the same market. However, there can be only one valid botanical name for a plant species and the quality of herbal formulations prepared as per the guidelines of classical texts, is highly dependent on the correct identification of the plant species being traded. This book has appropriately followed the latest ‘The International Code of Nomenclature for Algae, Fungi and Plants’ (ICN) 2012 to facilitate correct identification of the traded Indian medicinal plants. Further, basionyms and important synonyms are provided for many medicinal plants so as to include their popularly known botanical names. Another issue which affect the quality of traded medicinal plants is unauthorized substitutes and unknown adulterants. To address this issue, the compendium under review followed a scientific approach by providing modern taxonomic descriptions which equates the descriptions of plants in the classical texts along with 736 colour photographs covering various plants in trade and their official parts to help in

correct botanical identity.

The book aimed at documenting medicinal plants traded in the country, including vernacular names, description of the part in trade, trade information, taxonomic descriptions, habitat, distribution in India and the world and medicinal uses of 178 species that are in high volume trade (> 100 MT/Year) whereas for each low volume trade plants (776) species details such as accepted botanical names, widely used synonyms, trade names, parts traded, medical systems (viz. Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani, Sowa-rigpa, Homeopathy,



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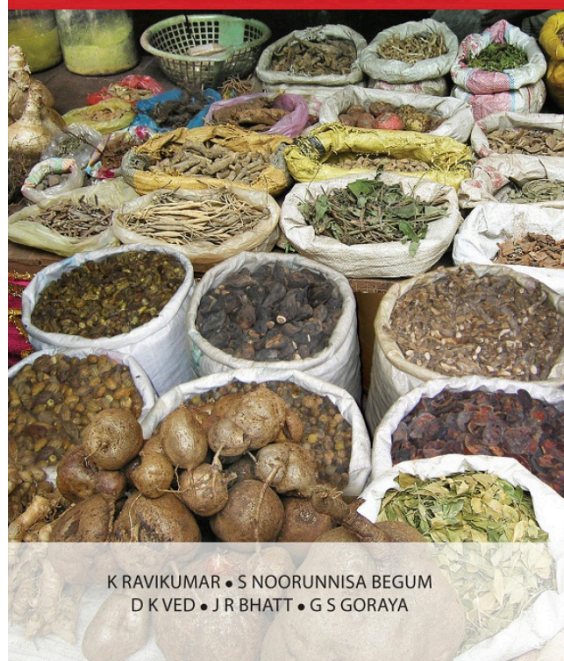


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### COMPENDIUM OF TRADED INDIAN MEDICINAL PLANTS



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Folk), brief botanical description, distribution and habitat are given. In essence, the compendium is well organised with excellent scheme of presentation with the details of species name, family, medical system, trade and vernacular names, plant parts in trade with distribution map including the medicinal uses portraying brief account of raw drugs traded with their known substitutes and adulterants along with a short plant profile.

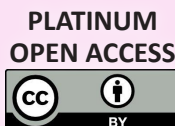
In India, most of the medicinal plant materials are being harvested from the wild so it is very important to clearly establish the specific regions from where the medicinal plants are being sourced. Such information in the form of distribution maps are provided for 159 high volume traded species in the compendium which will be highly useful for formulating necessary conservation and management measures for these medicinal plant sources.

Most of the data for this compendium originated from the field work carried out during 2002-2017 under a study of demand and supply of medicinal plants in India by the Foundation for Revitalization of Local

Health Traditions (FRLHT), a Centre of Excellence on Medicinal Plants and Traditional Knowledge under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), Government of India. The research efforts made by various individuals and institutes who have contributed in finalization of this book resulted in the successful and timely completion of this Compendium. The authors of this compendium and other individuals who have contributed towards remarkable and valuable photographs for this Compendium deserve much appreciation.

The work presented in this book will be most advantageous for students, researchers as well as academic staff researching plants for medicinal purposes in India and indeed the rest of the world. It will be useful for wide range of stakeholders including herbal pharmacies, exporters and importers of medicinal plants, managers of the forest resources and regulatory authorities. This book is an important contribution and is useful for maximizing the realization of the potential of traded medicinal plants found in India.





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