

Traditional Knowledge and Current Usage Patterns of Medicinal Plants: A Survey-Based Study

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Abstract: Medicinal plants remain an important component of household healthcare and traditional medical knowledge in India. This cross-sectional online survey assessed knowledge sources, procurement practices, frequency and purpose of medicinal-plant use, preparation methods, perceived effectiveness, barriers to utilization, and attitudes toward further learning among 214 respondents. Books and formal education were the leading reported source of knowledge (113/214; 52.8%), followed by family tradition (60/214; 28.0%) and traditional healers (50/214; 23.4%). Home gardens were the most frequently reported procurement source (109/214; 50.9%). 80 respondents (37.4%) reported daily use. Cold/cough (46.3%), skin problems (36.0%), and fever (33.2%) were the leading ailments for which medicinal plants were reportedly used. Tulsi (75.2%), Aloe vera (56.1%), and Neem (44.4%) were the most frequently reported plants. A total of 148 respondents reported increased use during the COVID-19 pandemic; this corresponds to 69.2% of the sample. Perceived effectiveness was generally favorable, with 132 respondents (61.7%) rating it 4 or 5 on a five-point scale. Lack of knowledge (42.1%) and preference for modern medicine (36.4%) were the principal barriers. Importantly, 198 respondents (92.5%) expressed interest in learning more about medicinal plants. The findings indicate continued community interest in medicinal plants and highlight the need for evidence-based education, responsible use, quality control, and conservation-oriented home cultivation. Because the study used a voluntary online convenience sample, the findings should not be generalized to the wider population without further representative studies.

Keywords: Medicinal plants; traditional knowledge; ethnobotany; usage patterns; home garden; survey; COVID-19; public perception.