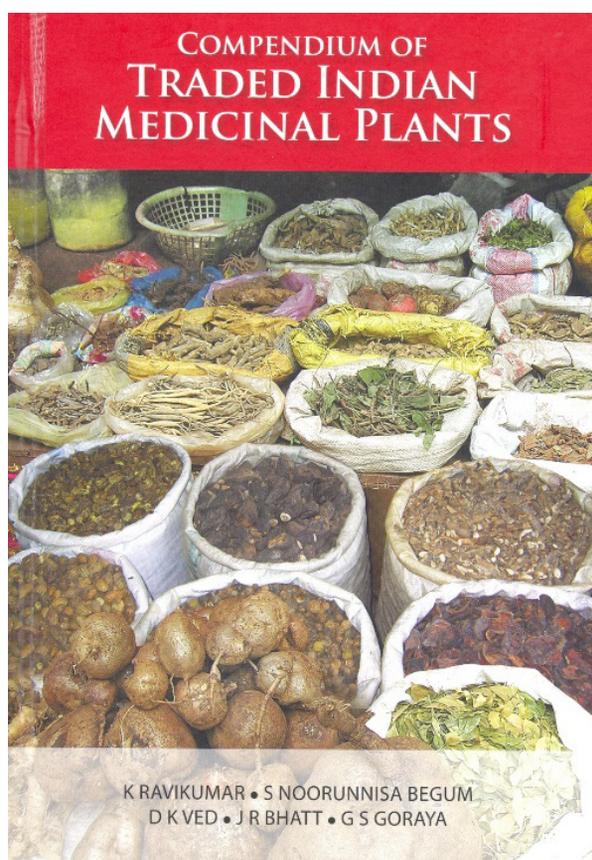


## Compendium of Traded Indian Medicinal Plants

K. Ravikumar, S. Noorunnisa Begum, D.K. Ved, J. R. Bhatt and G. S. Goraya, 2018.

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Trade in biological resources in general and medicinal plants in particular, is emerging as a topic of importance in international trade relations. Since biological resources in their diverse forms tend to be concentrated in relatively few locations in the tropics, harnessing their economic potential and at the same time ensuring their sustainable management is a national as well as a global challenge. This becomes an imperative in a bioculturally rich country like India, with its unique and living medicinal traditions in the form of codified systems such as the Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani and Sowa-Rigpa and the plethora of thriving oral traditions practiced by the indigenous and local communities. All these systems and traditions depend entirely on the availability of medicinal plant resources.

The compendium under review is a comprehensive and first of its kind offering on the subject of trade studies involving medicinal plants. The compendium is also in lines with the long list of unique publications on the subject, backed by decades of field work, came out of FRLHT, such as the *'Demand and Supply of Medicinal Plants in India'* by D.K. Ved and G.S. Goraya (2008) and *'Medicinal Plants in India: An Assessment of their Demand and Supply'* by G.S. Goraya and D.K. Ved (2017). These studies have come up with a definite number of medicinal plants in trade, including details such as trade names, parts traded and their sources of procurement. In this context, the *'Compendium of Traded Indian Medicinal Plants'* is exemplary with impressive color photo graphs (736 photographs).

This book deals with 954 medicinal plants in trade across India which are classified into two major categories: Highly traded (178 species) and Not so highly traded (776 species) based on the volume of the trade. This classification helps to steer the conservation efforts for plants that experience a survival stress due to unsustainable collection. The details such as volume of trade, geographical location and markets in which they are traded should lead to further studies on population of these species and quantification for a holistic understanding.

Current estimates indicate that India is a home for 6,560 species of medicinal plants, with the traded medicinal plant species forming relatively a small subset. Nevertheless, medicinal plants in trade require careful conservation and sustainable management strategies. Effective conservation action is possible only when there is a clear understanding on the sources of species under trade and their scale of demand and supply. The compendium has huge potential to contribute to the cause of conservation and sustainable utilization. Another important contribution of the compendium is the trade name–botanical name

correlation aiding in the clarification and correct identification of AYUSH pharmacopoeia species. Classical examples being *Vaividang*, *Bhumyamalaki* and *Bidari* etc. The compendium has addressed this issue in a big way with a scientific approach backed with field experience.

The compendium is well organized with a good 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. The book provides brief description of raw drugs traded along with their known substitutes and adulterants. A short plant profile is described.

India has a long and an uninterrupted history of documenting its traditional medicine and medicinal plants starting from the “Rigveda” (1700-1100 BCE) to the much later compendium works such as “Dhanwantari Nighantu” (1800 CE). These works were interspersed with continuous

cataloguing of Indian medicinal plants by the Portuguese (Colloquies on the Simples and Drugs of India, 1563), Dutch (Hortus Indicus Malabaricus, 1678-1693) and British workers (A Dictionary of Economic products of India, 1889-1896). This compendium is in line with those lofty traditions of continuous academic pursuit in the field of medicinal plants in this country towards understanding different dimensions of the subject.

The compendium is an equally appealing book to all the stakeholders such as AYUSH industries, traders, academia, policy makers, professional botanists and the layman.

The authors deserve much appreciation and credit to the work they have accomplished. This book is a valuable contribution to the growing science of medicinal plants traded in India.

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