

**IDENTIFYING AND MAPPING THE
DISTRIBUTION OF SELECTED MEDICINAL
PLANTS IN JAFFNA DISTRICT**

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ABSTRACT

Medicinal plants have significant roles in human livelihood and are medically, culturally and economically important resources for the local people. This study examines the current situation of selected important medicinal plants which are naturally grown and map out their distribution in Jaffna District to conserve and promote their cultivation. The study was conducted from April 2012 to August 2012 in Jaffna district. Detail information on importance, collection and usage were obtained from herbal collectors, Ayurveda drug manufacturers and Ayurveda shop owners. Based on their information, sixteen medicinal plants were selected in Jaffna district. Selected medicinal plants were *Adhatoda vasica*, *Asteracantha longifolia*, *Trianthema decandra*, *Calotropis gigantea*, *Rauwolfia tetraphylla*, *Gymnema sylvestre*, *Hemidesmus indicus*, *Cassia auriculata*, *Terminalia chebula*, *Phyllanthus emblica*, *Enicostemma littorale*, *Aloe vera*, *Tinospora cordifolia*, *Solanum xanthocarpum*, *Withania somnifera*, *Clerodendrum phlomidis*. Coordinates points of selected medicinal plants were taken by Global Positioning System (GPS) receiver and mapping was carried out through Geographic Information System (GIS) software. Among the 16 selected medicinal plants, ten were evenly distributed in Jaffna district and three were in patches and remaining there were in isolated spots. The distributions of ten selected medicinal plants were densely grown in Vadamardchi and Valikamam regions which come under DL₃ agro ecological zone. This shows these two regions have great potential to grow and collect the selected plant species. Plants were intermittently scattered throughout Thenmaradchi and Island regions. These information help to identify the medicinal plants growing hotspots to draw a plan to conserve and promote their cultivation as the soil and other environmental conditions are favourable for them.

Key words: Medicinal plants, Distribution maps, Jaffna District, GPS, GIS