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## An ethnobotanical study of medicinal plants used by the Paliyars aboriginal community in Theni district, Tamil Nadu, India, with special reference to skin diseases

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An ethnobotanical survey of medicinal plants used in curing skin diseases was carried out among Paliyar tribes in Theni district, Tamil Nadu (India). The indigenous knowledge of local traditional healers and the native plants used for medicinal purposes were collected through personal interviews during field trips. The plants were arranged family wise followed by botanical name of the plants, locality, ethnomedicinal use in briefs and local name. The voucher specimens have been deposited in herbarium of department of botany of VHNSN College (Autonomous), Virudhunagar. The collected plants were identified with referring standard compilations. Plants have been used as healers and health rejuvenators since time immemorial. A total of 65 plant species belonging to 37 families are described along the method of drug preparation, mode of administration, probable dosage and duration of treatment. The aim of the present study is not only to prescribe the remedies for skin diseases in human beings but also an endeavor to draw attention for the need of detailed study on medicinal plants of the area, which could provide better and efficient remedies for many dreadful diseases. This study concluded that many people in studied parts of Western Ghats of Theni district still continue to depend on medicinal plants at least for the treatment of primary healthcare. The traditional healers are dwindling in number and there is a grave danger of traditional knowledge disappearing soon since the younger generation is not interested to carry on this tradition. Hence, it is urgent need for documenting these before such valuable knowledge becomes inaccessible and extinct.

### Biography

Palanichamy Mehalingam has completed his PhD in Botany from Madurai Kamaraj University, Madurai in 2000. Currently he is working as an Assistant Professor of Botany, Virudhunagar Hindu Nadars' Senthikumara Nadar College (Autonomous) in India. He has published more than 65 research papers in reputed journals. He has participated and presented his research papers in international conferences.

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