

**ABUNDANCE, POPULATION STRUCTURE, DISTRIBUTION AND SOCIO-
ECONOMIC VALUE OF MEDICINAL PLANT RESOURCES TO THE TEPETH
COMMUNITY, MOROTO DISTRICT, UGANDA.**

BY

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Abstract

The study aimed at determining the distribution, abundance, population structure and the socio-economic value of medicinal plant resources to the rural Tepeth community living in and adjacent to Mt. Moroto forest reserve. The study involved a survey of the ecological and socio-economic factors affecting the growth and sustainability of medicinal plants in the forest reserve. The ecological aspect, involved a study of the diameter size class distribution of medicinal plant species.

In the socio-economic aspect. A detailed questionnaire was conducted to get information on common diseases to humans and livestock, medicinal plant species used to treat them and quantities of plant materials harvested. In the process therefore, medicinal resources from the forest reserve commonly harvested by the community and the diseases they treat were documented. Methods of harvesting were investigated and quantities harvested assessed. The economic value and use of these resources to the community were calculated. Investigated also was the awareness of the community towards conservation of resources.

The results indicate that for most of the common diseases in humans and livestock, the Tepeth community relies on medicinal plant resources from Mt. Moroto forest reserve for treatment. They harvest the plant materials with pangas and iron rods. These resources are however increasingly becoming scarce.

It was also found out that the community has cultivated a big sense of indigenous knowledge and cultural practices, some of which are centered on some of these resources. Interestingly, those plant species with cultural values, such as *Ficus veta* and *Ficus sycomorus* are enjoying substantial levels of conservation from the community. Other plant species, such as *Olinia usambarensis*, *Pappea capensis*, *Berberis holstii* and *Olea Africana* have been found to be rare and yet they are harvested in substantial quantities, hence, threatened. Other species such as *Terminalia brownie*, while abundant, were being harvested in very large volumes, not only for medicines, but also for other uses such as building, charcoal and brick burning.

The study revealed that medicinal plants are central in the life style of the Tepeth community residing in and around Mt. Moroto forest reserve, not only as a source of treatment for humans, but also for treating their livestock. The estimation of the economic value of these resources to the

community, based on the value of alternatives and labour costs has been found to be about Ushs. 371 million. This and other benefits from natural resources are not captured in the National Planning and budgeting process, a factor which has tremendous implications in setting national priorities and allocation of funds for development programs.