

Forest Pharmacy and Enterprise development in the Fijian setting. (Oral Presentation)

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Traditional Women Association of Natural Medicinal Therapy - "WAINIMATE"

Introduction

Wainimate recognizes that traditional medicine, health and healing is the first line of health care in rural and remote Fiji and calls for a wide consultation from community leaders, healers and all relevant stakeholders to support the initiative to develop a NTMP.

The World Health Organisation Alma Atta declaration in 1979 declared this support by placing simple treatments as one of the 9 elements for implementation. This commitment widely endorsed that traditional medicine and all components of traditional health therapies such as traditional birth attendants, bone setters, herbalists, acupuncture, massagers and others should be seen as complimentary to modern medicine and not as the common understanding to be the alternative therapy. The bio-prospecting article of Fiji's Sustainable Development Bill and the Biological Diversity Article (8j) calls for the recognition of indigenous knowledge and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilisation of such knowledge.

Wainimate as the traditional healers organization is committed to how healers and owners of the traditional knowledge in Fiji especially issues revolving around the following: registrations, intellectual cultural property rights (ICPR), compensations, safety and efficacy in the preparations. While we treasure the sentiments that revolve around this, Wainimate is also looking at how forest pharmacies could generate eco- development opportunities (enterprise development) for healers and local communities around Fiji.

This paper will discuss issues of plants and their medicinal uses, forest pharmacies, indigenous knowledge, traditional skills and eco- enterprise development prospects for Fiji

Objectives

To describe the indigenous plants and their uses; To define how the reserved forest pharmacy could generate eco-development opportunities; To discuss traditional knowledge, indigenous skills and enterprise development at the local level.

Methods

Ethnobotany experience - tagging the plants and their medicinal uses with the assistance of healers, elders and the Department of Forestry. Social and Resource mapping.

Results

Reserved forest with natural and historical sites that are used for tourism purposes today. Documenting community economics and identifying products that holds capital value and can be further developed for commercial purposes.

Conclusion

There is greater need for scientists to collaborate and document plants and their many uses, especially medicinal use. It is also important to uphold the cultural and property rights issues. Healers especially in the Pacific should be encouraged to document their knowledge about plants and pass on the information to their generations. We should also be talking about compensations to reciprocate both the knowledge and the gift of healing. Healers and rural communities should be encouraged to develop eco-non timber products for income generation activities and sustainable development.

Keywords: traditional knowledge, natural resources, conservation, preservation, enterprise development

Selected References

None

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