

8<sup>th</sup> Annual Congress on **TRADITIONAL AND ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE**

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**Local perceptions on the values, conservation, and ethnobotanical study of medicinal and multipurpose plants in and around selected church forests****Eguale Tadesse Kifle***Ethiopian Forestry Development, Ethiopia*

Society has varied attitudes and perception on the forest resources around them. Ethno botanical knowledge should be integrated with biophysical studies in order to be used for managing and conserving forests. The objectives of the study were to assess the existing knowledge about the uses of plant species and to examine the plant species that provide the various uses. Focus group discussion, questionnaire-based social survey and vegetation inventory were undertaken. The focus group discussants were selected from traditional healers, elders of the society, development agents, and people who are knowledgeable about the vegetation of the areas. Voucher specimens were collected for those species difficult to identify and identified at Herbarium Laboratory of Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia. The data analysis was done by descriptive statistics using Excel 2010 and SPSS v20. The results indicated agricultural expansion, charcoal making and fuel wood as the major causes of deforestation in Site 1, Site 2 and Site 3 respectively. Livestock owned by household respondents (HHs) and wildlife in each site were also mentioned likely to affect the vegetation. The most effective solution for the degradation to protect the church forests was religious preaching as stated by group discussants. The plant species have varied uses in the 3 sites such as traditional medicine, food, construction wood, household utensils, and firewood but higher present of the mentioned species were used either for human or livestock medicine. Sorensen similarity index indicated Site 1 and Site 2 have 12.5%, Site 1 and Site 3 have 10.9% and Site 2 and Site 3 have 43.5 % similarities. Documenting the wealth of indigenous knowledge and in situ conservation of the plant species are key recommendations.

**Biography**

Eguale Tadesse has his expertise in biodiversity conservation and forest development. His research findings give good information for natural resource conservationists and those interested in indigenous knowledge. He is experienced in agroforestry development, forest conservation and soil management. He has built a research, teaching, and field work practice. He is open and sociable to all the staffs and stakeholders to share knowledge and experience..