Abstract

In sub-Saharan Africa about 80% of the ever increasing population depends on ethnomedicine for their healthcare since modern medicine is mostly expensive or unavailable in rural homesteads. However, ethnomedicine is the one presently recognised as the most effective in treating new emerging diseases such as HIV/AIDS since no effective conventional medicine exists for their cure. Medicinal plants germplasm, which are the major sources of ethnomedicine form an important part of forests and riverine vegetation in Kenya. These important plants include Warburgia, Rhas spp., Aspilia, Acacia, prunus, Molinga, Brascae, Aloe, and Terminalia. These plants are not only useful to man as a source of medicine but are microhabitats for many animals as well as forming “refugia” to many insects species. In Kenya, due to land degradation and rampant deforestation in agriculturally high potential areas, medicinal plants genetic resource is threatened. The most medicinally popular of these plant species, which are mostly biome restricted, are facing extermination. This paper reports conservation concerns in agriculturally high potential Trans-Nzoia District in Kenya. The study based on field surveys revealed that of the ca. 806 plants species in 92 families about 36 species are used for medicinal purposes. The plants are threatened in their indigenous localities in the District. The study recommends participatory in situ plant conservation in the District along maize and wheat farm hedges.