

**INVESTIGATION OF TRADITIONAL MEDICINES'
KNOWLEDGE IN THE MASINGA LOCATION OF MASINGA
DISTRICT, MACHAKOS COUNTY.**

BY

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL
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ABSTRACT

Traditional healers provide health care by using vegetation, animal and mineral substances and certain other methods based on the social, cultural and religious backgrounds. In some Asian and African countries, 80% of the population depends on traditional medicine for primary health care. In many developed countries, 70-80% has used some form of alternative or complementary medicine. Herbal treatments are the most popular form of traditional medicines. Many countries including Kenya have not yet released a national policy for traditional medicines, hence the practice is not well regulated. The goal of the research project was to investigate and establish the presence of traditional medicines knowledge in Masinga location.

Data was collected by use of questionnaires and presented by use of tables and pie charts. Commendable work is that by the renowned botanist John Kokwaro who wrote a book on ethnobotany covering East and Central Africa nearly twenty years ago. A number of other scientists including Kareru and his colleague's (researched in Embu and Mbeere Districts), Jeruto and her colleagues (covered Nandi District) and Kisangau and Owuor (researched on Kenyan medicinal plants used as antivenin) have published more detailed ethnobotanical works in their places of interest.

Masinga Location in Masinga District of Machakos County has a population of 19,000 people and is approximately 150 km East of Nairobi in Kenya's Eastern Province. It has 45 male traditional healers and 20 female traditional healers, who apply both medicines and traditional practices in management of healthcare within the community.

This research project was carried out in Masinga location which has four sub-locations including Masinga, Musumaa, Mukusu and Katulye. 33 plants for human ailments and 14 plants for animal ailments management were encountered plus a few other traditional practices. The plants are native and the researcher was not able to identify all of them by their botanical and English names. Trees are mostly used compared to herbs. In analyzing the data, 56% of male traditional healers and 24% of women traditional healers were interviewed. Generally male traditional healers outnumbered the female traditional healers. The research permit was obtained from the National Council for Science and Technology. The data was collected from 28/9/2012 to 19/10/2012.