

Review of: "Compendium of Bangladesh Folk and Tribal Medicinal Plants"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

[Book Review] "Compendium of Bangladesh Folk and Tribal Medicinal Plants"

The book is edited by Dr. Mohammed Rahmatullah, Prof. Dr. Rownak Jahan, and Dr. Taufiq Rahman. University of Development Alternative, Dhaka, Bangladesh; Cambridge University, UK, 2016. pp. 395, 17 chapters with bibliography, Hard cover, US\$60.00. ISBN: 978-984-91467-7-3.

The book (volume 1) is about the compilation of Bangladeshi medicinal plants used by folk and tribal medical practitioners, resulting from a total of 188 ethnomedicinal surveys conducted by the authors and their teams (data collectors, students, and colleagues) among folk and different tribal practitioners in villages, towns, and cities of Bangladesh. The book is divided into seventeen chapters. Each chapter starts with the name of a plant and then gives more information such as synonyms, ethnomedicinal uses in Bangladesh and outside Bangladesh, reported phytochemical constituents (with structure) of the plant, reported pharmacological activities of the plant, and a brief discussion on the reported phytochemicals and pharmacological activities of other plants in that particular genus. The list of places and communities surveyed is given in Appendix 1 (pp. 341-353). In Appendix 3 (pp 355-387), the authors listed the published articles of the various ethnomedicinal surveys they have conducted from 2009 onwards across the country.

Bangladesh has a rich history of alternative and complementary medicine, commonly known as traditional medicinal practices. To date, this book volume is the first attempt to document medical practices on such an extensive scale of the folk and tribal traditions of Bangladesh. In Bengali, folklorists are commonly called 'kavirajes' and rely primarily on medicinal plants for treatment, which have been used for thousands of years in folk and tribal medicine systems and are verbally passed down from generation to generation. The plants contain various phytochemicals or secondary biometabolites with specific pharmacological bioactivities and disease-healing effects that can be an excellent source for the invention of modern drugs, for example, quinine, morphine, aspirin, tubocurarine, metformin, etc.

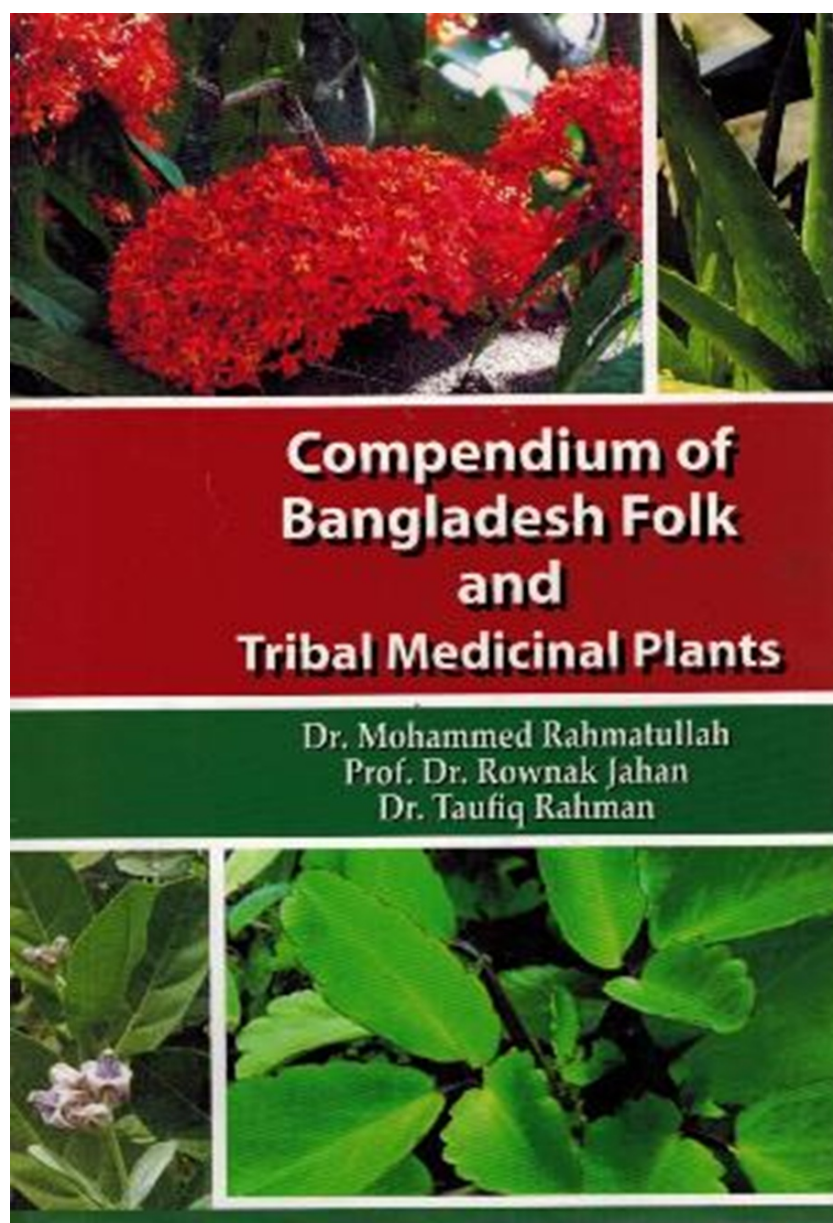


Figure 1. Book Cover of "Compendium of Bangladesh Folk and Tribal Medicinal Plants"

Dr. M. Rahmatullah is a pioneer in ethnomedicine research in Bangladesh, documenting the traditional phytomedicine practices of more than 40 tribes in Bangladesh and more than 300 folk physicians in the country. This book and subsequent volumes have inspired more interest in the research and conservation of medicinal plants from Bangladesh, as well as satisfied the desire of students, researchers, and scientists to explore more about the rich phytotherapeutic history of Bangladesh.

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Conflict of Interest

None.