

Traditional Knowledge of Medicinal and Food Plant Uses for Sustainable Community Livelihoods: A Case of Batswana Communities in South Africa

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ABSTRACT This paper uses the case of the Batswana people to demonstrate the use of indigenous knowledge (IK) on plant species for medicine and food. The study showed that traditionally the Batswana have a rich indigenous knowledge about the plant species diversity of their environment including community uses of the plant species. The sustainable utilization of these indigenous natural resources was governed by certain socio-cultural protocols, which included the veneration of ancestors. The study recommends further research including validation of the already documented IK of the biodiversity, identification of the actual location of the documented indigenous plant species in order to develop conservation mechanisms, promotion of this knowledge by incorporating it into the school curriculum so that it is not lost, and development of mechanisms to protect this knowledge and plant species from exploitation by outsiders.