

Traditional Uses of Animal and Animal Products in Medicine and Rituals by the Shoka Tribes of District Pithoragarh, Uttaranchal, India

Chandra S. Negi* and Veerendra S. Palyal

*Lecturer, Department of Zoology, Government Postgraduate College,
Pithoragarh 262 502, Uttaranchal, India*

**Telephone: 05964-226111, *E-mail: csnsacred1@rediffmail.com*

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ABSTRACT Inter-linkages between cultural diversity and the environmental ethics or traditional conservation, has been very less understood, lest studied (Negi 2003). Traditional mode of living or sustenance, invariably relates to the immediate nature and the resources that reside therein. Traditional people, thus have been using the myriad resources-be that the timber, fibres, medicinal plants, edible plants and others, but more importantly have been engaged in bringing forth the subtle and innovative uses of the same so that the maximum benefit is accrued. One such innovation is the use of wild fauna or their parts in the traditional medicine and rituals. The present paper thus attempts to inventorize this little left out resource base among the Shoka tribes of Darma and Johaar valleys, in Pithoragarh district in the state of Uttaranchal, India, with an aim that this knowledge bank could be put to more efficacious use through sustainable harvest. A total of 38 species (mammals-20, birds-6, reptiles-5, insects-4, fish-2, and a lone amphibian), belonging to 16 families, led by bovidae (6), equidae, felidae and leporidae (2 each), and the rest being constituted by a single species, were either being used by the common-folks in the treatment of different diseases or were in possession of the knowledge base of the usage of the same. A total of 19 different diseases or disorders were being treated using the animal products. Out of the total 38 species, only a minuscule 3 species had multiple uses, as regards the treatment of different diseases.