

PREFACE

Pteridophytes (ferns and fern allies) are the earliest vascular land plants, originated in the Mid-Paleozoic era during Silurian period i.e. about 250 million years ago and are still luxuriantly available in wide range of habitats in the world. Thus, it is not surprising to know that ferns have been known to man for more than 2000 years for their medicinal values. The medicinal value of plants lies in the presence of an array of bioactive constituents which generate a specific physiological action on the human body. Natural drug has gained remarkable popularity in recent years owing to the increasing reports on adverse effects of synthetic drugs. Ferns and ferns allies are expected to contain more phytochemicals compared to other plants and have now been regarded as a potential group of plants for drug isolation.

However, ferns have been given lesser attention than the flowering plants in pharmaceuticals and modern therapies. Despite being one of the richest regions in Pteridophytic flora, ferns of Himalayas have been scarcely studied for their biological activities. Considering the importance of herbal drugs, this study has been envisaged to identify some ferns with potential biological activities along with the underlying compounds present in it.

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