Ethnoveterinary research and development is a holistic interdisciplinary study of indigenous knowledge and associated skills, practices, beliefs, and social structures pertaining to the healthcare and husbandry of income producing animals, has emerged as a fertile field for generation and transfer appropriate and sustainable veterinary alternatives to the stock raisers 1-4. In Indian agriculture, livestock plays a key role in the farmers' life. They provide farm power, rural transport, manure, fuel, milk and meat, but also a major role in rural economy by providing income and employment to the small hold farmers and other weaker sections of the society 5. Though, traditional uses of medicinal plants have been continuing since time immemorial and majority of the people are depending on medicinal plants for various ailments, only a few reports are available for ethnoveterinary practices 6,7.

The study was conducted at Puthalam village situated on the west coast of Cape Comorin, Arabian sea (Fig. 1), which is about 8 km from Cape Comorin (8°11'N; and 77°28'E). The annual rainfall varies from 89-110 cm, and mean annual temperature is 28°C. Topographically, this district is broadly classified into three distinct regions, i.e. coastal, middle and mountainous regions. Trees like Anacardium occidentale, Azadiracta indica, Borassus flabellifer, Cocos nucifera, Mangifera indica, Tamarindus indica, etc. are the common economically important plants of this area. The people of the village besides practicing agriculture also domesticated cattle for their use in agricultural works. Most of the people of this village treat their cattle using medicinal plants around themselves. Therefore, it is imperative to know the ethnoveterinary medicinal plants of unexplored region such as Puthalam, Cape Comorin.

Methodology
During the field trips (2003-2004), a number of rural people and veterinary medicinal practitioners (commonly called Mattu Vaidhiyar) of the village who are using herbal remedies to cure their cattle suffering from different diseases were interviewed. Specimens of plant species were collected and identified with the help of different floras 8-10. The herbarium of Scott Christian College (SCH), Nagercoil, was consulted for correct identification of plant specimens. The voucher specimens were deposited at the herbarium of Scott Christian College, Nagercoil.

Enumeration
Plants that are known and highly regarded in veterinary practices are enumerated with botanical name, family, vernacular (Tamil) name and uses for various ailments.

Abrus precatorius Linn. (Fabaceae); Kuntumani, Whole plant is given orally for dysentery.
Abutilon indicum (Linn.) Sweet (Malvaceae); Thutti, Leaf is given orally for dysentery.
Acacia nilotica (Linn.) Delile (Mimosaceae); Karuvelam, Tender pods are given every morning and evening to increase lactation.

Acalypha indica Linn. (Euphorbiaceae); Kuppaimeni, Leaf paste with pepper are applied for skin diseases.

Achyranthes aspera L. (Amaranthaceae); Nayuruvi, Leaf extract is used for eye troubles.

Adhatoda vasica Nees (Acanthaceae); Adhatoda, Decoction of the leaves and stem is used to cure fever and cough. Leaf extract is externally used for ectoparasites and skin diseases.

Aloe vera Tourn. ex Linn. (Liliaceae); Sothukattalai, Plant is used for wound healing and skin diseases.

Andrographis paniculata Nees (Acanthaceae); Nilavembu, Whole plant decoction is used for fever and cough.

Aristolochia bracteolata Lam. (Aristolochiaceae); Atutinnapalai, Leaves grounded with Anisomeles malabarica, pepper and garlic is given orally in ephemeral fever.

Aristolochia indica L. (Aristolochiaceae); Iswaramuli, Leaf is given orally for insect bite.

Asparagus racemosus Willd. (Liliaceae); Sathaveli, Plant tubers increase lactation in lactating cattle.

Azadiracta indica A. Juss. (Meliaceae); Vembu, Leaf is used as insecticide, antiviral and anticeptic. Neem oil is used for wound healing.

Bauhinia variegata Linn. (Caesalpiniaceae). Bark decoction is used to wash wounds in foot and mouth and to cure foot and mouth disease in cattle.

Bombax ceiba Linn. (Bombacaceae); Mullilavu, Bark decoction is given to the cattle suffering from excess bleeding after delivery.

Borassus flabellifer Linn. (Arecaceae); Panai, Inflorescence is given orally for cure dysentery.

Calotropis procera (Ait.) R. Br. (Asclepiadaceae); Eruku, Latex is applied externally for wound healing.

Canthium parviflorum Lam. (Rubiaceae); Kharichedi, Leaf paste mixed with coconut oil is applied on fractures.

Cassia absus Linn. (Caesalpiniaaceae); Mulaippalvirai, Leaf paste is used for wound healing.

Cassia obtusa Roxb. (Caesalpiniaaceae); Nilavakai, Whole plant is used as a laxative.

Cassia occidentalis Linn. (Caesalpiniaaceae); Ponnavirai, Leaf paste is used externally for wound healing and skin diseases.

Cassia tora Linn. (Caesalpiniaaceae); Tagarai, Seed paste is used to cure ring worm and other skin diseases.

Cissus quadrangularis Linn. (Vitaceae); Pirantai, The plant is tied on placenta after delivery to hasten removal of placenta.

Cleome viscosa Linn. (Capparidaceae); Naikaduku, Leaf juice is applied on wounds to prevent decay and microbial growth.

Cocos nucifera Linn. (Arecaceae); Thennai, Tender pods are used to cure dysentery. Seed oil is applied on wounds and skin diseases.

Curculigo orchioides Gaertn. (Amaryllidaceae); Nilapanai, Dried tubers ground with stem of Cissus quadrangularis is given orally for impaction.

Dendrocalamus strictus Nees (Poaceae); Moongil, Leaf is given orally to cure dysentery.

Euphorbia hirta Linn. (Euphorbiaceae); Ammanpatcharisi, Latex is applied on wounds.

Gymnema sylvestre R. Br. (Asclepiadaceae); Sirukurinjan, Leaves ground with pepper, garlic and pinch of common salt is given orally in ephemeral fever. Leaf juice is used as eye drop to cure opacity of cornea.

Mangifera indica Linn. (Anacardiaceae); Mamaram, Seed is used for dysentery.

Pergularia daemia (Forsk.) Chiov. (Asclepiadaceae); Veliparuthi, Latex is used to cure ringworm and skin diseases.

Pongamia pinnata Pierre (Fabaceae); Pongam, Leaf paste is used for wound healing and seed oil is used for wound healing and skin diseases.

Tamarindus indica Linn. (Caesalpiniaaceae); Pulimaram, Leaf paste is applied to reduce wound swellings and relieve pain.

Tinospora cordifolia (Willd.) Miers ex. Hook. f. & Thoms. (Menispermaceae); Amirtavalli, Leaf paste
is used to reduce swelling in the mammary of lactating livestock.

_Tylophora indica_ (Burm.f.) Merr. (Asclepiadaceae); _Nancharuppan_, Leaves ground with _Tinospora cordifolia_ are given against insect bite. Leaves are given orally to cure digestion problems. _Vitex negundo_ Linn. (Verbenaceae). Leaves are used as an antibacterial and insecticide to discharge worm from stomach.

Results and discussion

A total of 34 species of angiosperms belonging to 30 genera and 21 families are enumerated. Caesalpiniaceae was the most specious family (6 species), followed by Asclepiadaceae (3 species). Acanthaceae, Arecaceae, Aristolochiaceae, Euphorbiaceae, Fabaceae and Liliaceae were represented by two species each, whereas 13 families were monospecific. The study deals with 20 various types of cattle diseases. Eight species are used to treat wound healing, 6 species in dysentery, 4 species skin diseases and 3 species each in fever and induced lactation and rest of the species are used for other types of ailments. The information obtained are comparable favorably with the result of similar studies conducted in other states of India11,12.

_Azadiracta indica_, _Calotropis procera_, _Cassia absus_, _Cassia occidentalis_, _Cleome viscosa_, _Euphorbia hirta_, _Pongamia pinnata_ and _Tamarindus indica_ are used for wound healing; _Acalypha indica_, _Adhatoda vasica_, _Aloe vera_ and _Cassia tora_ for skin diseases and in eye troubles. _Abrus precatorius_, _Abutilon indicum_, _Borassus flabellifer_, _Cocos nucifera_, _Dendrocalamus strictus_ and _Mangifera indica_ are used to cure dysentery. _Bauhinia variegata_ is used as a medicine for foot and mouth diseases. Some medicinal plants namely, _Bombax ceiba_, _Tinospora cordifolia_, _Tylophora indica_, _Vitex negundo_ are used for different kind of ailments. Mostly leaves are predominantly used vis-à-vis other plant parts. _Euphorbia hirta_ is also extensively used for wound healing purpose in Southeastern Nigeria4. Since, the present study is not exhaustive in depth study on inventorisation of ethnoflora incorporating the indigenous knowledge is essential.

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