



DECLINING TRADITIONAL HERBAL MEDICINAL KNOWLEDGE

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Herbal medicines involve the integration of several therapeutic experiences and practices of indigenous systems of medicine that may span many previous generations, which often provides valuable guidelines to the selection, preparation and application of herbal formulation for the treatment, control and management of variety of ailments. According to World Health Organization, 60% of the world's population depends on traditional medicine and 80% of the population in developing countries depends almost entirely on traditional medicine practices and herbal medicines for their primary health care needs. Usually the traditional knowledge about the medicinal values of different species is passed from one generation to next generation either through oral communication or by limited practicing. Many of the medicinal plants and their derivatives were being used for curing a variety of ailments by different communities and local medical practitioners on basis of their tradition knowledge which were passed-on from their predecessors and their own experiences.

The traditional knowledge about the medicinal plants and their benefits are restricted with a variety of communities, and these have not yet been explored by scientific community in different remotely localised areas. In the process of rapid modernization and advancement of

medical sciences, partially documented or undocumented knowledge on ethnomedicine began to deplete drastically. Although several ethnobotanists and anthropologists have made attempts at documenting such knowledge in various parts of the world, several remote localities and indigenous communities have remained unnoticed. One of the challenges in this process is sometimes local practitioners and

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communities hesitate to disclose their traditional knowledge to outside world due to some beliefs, myths and misconceptions, which should be resolved by convincing them about their role in broader aspects. Their knowledge can directly help Ayurvedic and pharmaceutical industries which are involved in natural and synthetic drugs preparation respectively. These industries can provide the assistance to the communities and acquire the knowledge which are cost effective and with minimum side effects. Rapid pace of development and socio-economic transformations have led to erosion of natural resources and Traditional Knowledge in India. Hence efforts are needed to save this knowledge system.