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Phytoresources, Traditional Medicine and their Conservation

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Opinion

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Today the world is facing major crisis with energy, food and population. It is none other than plants which can provide the whole thing to conquer all these. Next to these plants used as fodder, fibers, construction materials and above all medicines. Plants as medicines are used in all civilization and culture. Especially in developing countries, the indigenous modes of treatment are part of their culture, socially acceptable and economically viable. It is estimated that one in seven of all existing plant has medicinal or curative power, but only if carefully chosen and properly prepared. Scientific analysis of medicinal plants has led to the discovery of many important modern drugs and WHO, has listed 20,000 medicinal plants used in different parts of the world. It is widely accepted that folk or traditional medicinal uses (ethnomedicinal information) of plants indicate the presence of a biologically active constituent(s) in a plant. Ingredients sourced from wild plants are not only widely used in traditional medicines, but are also increasingly valued as raw materials in the preparation of modern medicines and herbal preparations. Greater demand and increased human populations are leading to increased and often unsustainable rates of exploitation of wild sourced ingredients, with some wild species already threatened with extinction. Wild populations of numerous species are overexploited around the globe, the demand created by the traditional medicine being one of the causes of the overexploitation. In this context, research opportunities should focus on the documentation of the traditional uses, the cultural and ecological aspects associated with such practices. Despite the importance of traditional medicine for public health in many parts of the world, the practitioners of ethno-medicine appear to be at a greater risk of extinction than even forests and other biomes. So, knowledge of the use of plants is disappearing faster than the plants themselves. Traditional knowledge on ethno-medicine is rapidly disappearing, owing to cultural change and declining access in both urban and rural areas to sources of natural medicinal products. Most villages in the World are no longer surrounded by the natural habitat that formerly served as a medicine storeroom, and bodies of folk knowledge that have accumulated and been sharpened for thousands of years are disappearing at an alarming rate. The destruction of tropical forests has meant, in many parts of the tropical region, increasing disappearance of native peoples who have been living in these areas and who have accumulated a compendium of folk knowledge about the usefulness of plants for curing various diseases. Biodiversity loss reduces the supplies of raw materials for drug discovery and biotechnology. As a result, it causes a loss of medical models, affects the spread of human diseases, and threatens food production and water quality. Its reduction has direct effects on the discovery of important medicines. In addition to the role biodiversity plays in helping people recover from illness, makes a significant contribution in preventing disease and illness, since well-functioning ecosystems can help protect human health. Nevertheless, the implications of biodiversity loss for the global environment have not been widely discussed. Recently, attention has been paid to its direct and serious effects on human health.

The heavy dependency on plant resources is largely conditioned by several factors including their accessibility and socio-cultural value. However, increasing population, urbanization and over exploitation have necessitated the urgent need for conservation of these plant resources. Depletion of natural resources is the major challenges to each scientist all over the world to conserve our nature. It is more important to conserve the biodiversity in a sustainable manner. Habitat depletion had been conveying threats to both wildlife and tribal inhabitants. By itself, restorative steps must be taken and initiatives should be made

for sustainable use of phytoresources. Moreover, documentation of traditional knowledge is globally given priority since together with phytoresources the indigenous knowledge has also plummeting to extinction. Therefore, conservation of phytoresources and preservation of plant genetic resources have major consequence on priority basis with detailed study.

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