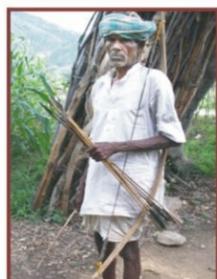




Folk Herbal Medicine and Drug Discovery

S.S. Katewa



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Folk Herbal Medicine and Drug Discovery

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FOREWORD

The present Volume contains 24 papers carefully selected by the Editors from a large number of contributions at the International conference on ethnobotany, and herbal drugs, drug discovery and related subjects held at Udaipur in the year 2010. In a way, it represents salient proceedings of the Conference.

Useful therapeutic substances from natural products have been the main source of medicines curing human and animal health disorders from time immemorial. Till recent, all herbal cures had their origin in folklores, which in turn were based on keen observations of forest dwellers, shepherds and herdsmen on birds and animals; the latter, by some curious and yet less understood intuition chose what to eat, and what to avoid. Birds and other animals also gave indication of plants helpful in their ailments. Early man tried with his own discretion and wisdom as also by trial and error these early leads on his fellowmen, and after long trial and error method must have gradually become selective about herbs for particular ailments. This in turn was the birth of our organized indigenous systems of medicines.

Remarkable advances on the one hand in diagnostic methods, and on the other, in researches took medical science from crude drug level to molecules and capsules and pills of today.

The papers in this volume deal with a large variety of topics like biological activities and aspects of herbal drug research, such as anticancer, antidiabetic, anti-ischemic, antimicrobial, ethnomedicine, ethnopharmacology, pharmacognostic, and phytochemistry.

The editors have put the papers under two broad themes, namely: **1. Pharmacology of Natural Plant Products, and 2. Traditional knowledge and Biodiversity Conservation.**

The first theme has 15 papers, and the second has 9 papers.

Three aspects need special mention:

1. Interest of many young research workers, such as papers by Bukola Adenubi, Jayson Wau, Vartika Jain, and Hitesh Singhadia ensure continuity and bright future of this thrust area of research.
2. Many papers from overseas scientists provide opportunity to evaluate some aspects of this topical subject at global level.
3. Some allied aspect like nutraceuticals, social aspect of collaborative research and conservation add to value of the volume.

The conference and its proceedings remind of the symposium organized by Ciba (now Novartis) about 15 years ago in Brazil on "Ethnobotany and search for new drugs".

Finally, Prof. S.S. Katewa and his team deserve appreciation for not only very successfully organizing the Conference, but more so for bringing out the proceedings with a years time.

I am sure, this volume will find place in all R&D institutions related with plant sciences as also human health.

S.K. Jain

PREFACE

The system of medicine practiced by the traditional folkhealers and medicinemen has been called as the “Folklore Medicine” which is also a part of the “Traditional Medicine” practiced in India in the name of “Ayurveda” and “Siddha” and in other names in various part of world. It is so called because the information about medicinal properties of plants came down traditionally through several generations of experience and through trial and error by the primitive men-the folklore living in the remote forest and villages. They from their experience knew that a particular plant extract had a useful drug effect and passed on that information orally to their descendants. Usually folkloric information comes from person who have no formal training or apprenticeship in a recognized system of medicine.

Although, traditional medicine flourished in India for quite a long time yet for a while it was subdued under the impact of modern medicine. With the coming of chemical revolution in world and boom of synthetic products including the synthetic medicines, the faith in and the popularity of Traditional Herbal Medicine gradually declined. But as science revealed the great hazards of synthetic medicines on human health combined with their high cost which is beyond the reach of common people the Traditional Herbal Medicine has once again started gaining importance all over the world but specially in the developing countries.

History is evidence of the fact that many valuable drugs of our modern medicine have been discovered by knowing that a particular plant was used by the ancient folkhealers in one or more of the ancient cultures of world for the treatment of some kinds of ailments and information that a plant was used by the traditional healers of ancient civilization is often an indication that it is worth scientific study today. Thus, we cannot longer afford to ignore reports of any aboriginal use of a plant merely because they seem to fall beyond the limits of our credence. To do so would be tantamount to the closing of a door, forever to entomb a peculiar kind of native knowledge; which might lead us along paths of immeasurable progress.

Many wild plants used in the traditional medicines of tribal and other such communities are important sources of biodynamic compounds. Chemical and pharmacological investigations of such plants are important for the discovery of new therapeutic agents. The continued emergence of many wonder drugs discovered during the last fifty years indicates the still untouched material wealth of unknown medicinal value found in plants employed in tribal medicine.

Keeping above facts in mind and to promote the folk herbal medicine at international level, an “International Conference on Folk and Herbal Medicine” was organized at Udaipur in 2010 as areas around this city are known for tribal habitats.

After organization of this mega international academic event, it was felt that a proceeding of the conference has to be brought out as early as possible. However, it got delayed due to various reasons for which I really feel sorry and tender my apology to all concerned.

The volume contains 24 research papers by eminent authorities in their fields under two major theme groups, namely- “Pharmacology of Natural Plant Products” and “Traditional Knowledge and Biodiversity Conservation”.

I am heartily thankful to the eminent scientists who responded to our request and sent their valuable contributions. Financial support for the conference was provided by several agencies, particularly Department of AYUSH, DST, DBT, UGC, Maharana Mewar Charitable Foundation, Udaipur, CSIR, INSA, DST, Govt. of Rajasthan and INSA. The organizers are thankful to all of them.

The conference was unique in having participation and interaction of indigenous healers (Gunnis) with international scientific community and very good participation of young scientists and research scholars from India and abroad.

S. S. Katewa

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Theme I

Pharmacology of Natural Plant Products

