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Traditional knowledge and medicinal therapy in rural landscape of India: Ethnobotany, livelihood and sustainable conservation

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Studies related to ethnobotany and sustainable use of herbal drugs have received world attention as developed countries are turning back towards the use of plant-based medicines due to side effects of certain allopathic drugs. People of the developing countries have been living vicinity to natural resources since generations, they relied on herbal drugs as their primary health care system. Currently, traditional knowledge pertaining to medicinal therapy is receding in wake of ever-rising industrial demand and modernization. In addition, popularization of synthetic drugs as to that of traditional plant supported drugs have further triggered the diminishing of traditional therapy and associated knowledge. Hence, documentation and conservation of these medicinal plants have become issues and big challenges to scientific community throughout the globe. India nurtures a unique geo-climatic and phyto-geography region which harboured both hotspots (endemic species) and megabiodiversity country highlighting distinct biodiversity based livelihood systems. Further, India being as one of the megabiodiversity centres in the world, the plants endorsed rich in bioactive secondary compounds that hold promises for new drug discovery at global market level. As such majority of the Indian population chunk living in rural setup derived their livelihood from forest based minor produces and agricultural support systems. Exploitations of these natural areas under the provision of urbanization have accelerated the rate of exploitation of plants and need based knowledge. Thus, in the present scenario the medicinal plant sector is not well conserved and needs special attention. In the way of revitalizations of traditional medicines, it is an effort to record and discuss all the medicinal plants of tribal/rural areas of Himalayan and Indogangetic regions and also to prioritise their implementation in modern health care systems. The present paper will aim to highlight ethnobotanical properties and associated indigenous knowledge, livelihood and sustainable conservation of medicinal plants in Indian perspective.

Biography

Gopal Shankar Singh obtained a Bachelor and Master degree from Department of Botany, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, India and a PhD degree in Environmental Sciences from School of Environmental Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India. Currently he is serving as Professor in Institute of Environment and Sustainable Development in BHU. He is the author or co-author of 85 scientific papers/articles in peer-reviewed national and international journals and book chapters and has been serving as an editorial board member of repute. His researches focus on Ethnobotany, traditional knowledge, biodiversity conservation, natural resource management and sustainable development.

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