



Editorial

Sustainable Resource Management of Medicinal Plants through Conservation: Need of the hour

The nature of diversity in environmental regimes and its position at the tri-junction of African, Eurasian and Oriental biotas have enabled India to harbor over 1,25,000 species of living organisms, constituting about 5% of known species of the world. This country has very rich elements of endemics in its flora. It has been estimated that about 35% of the higher plant flora is endemic to India. Out of the 34 hotspots of biodiversity identified in the world, India share geographic area of four hotspots located in the Himalaya, Western Ghats & Srilanka, Indo-Burma and Sundaland. These hotspots are rich in endemic flora.



India has a long history and strong base of Ayurveda and its offshoot traditional systems of medicine which are gaining the attention of international community. The health promotive, disease preventive, rehabilitative and recuperative roles of Ayurveda with its holistic approach are the reasons for its acceptance. Natural resources viz flora, fauna and mineral resources are used in this system. Holistic concepts about wellness health and disease management of this system with natural products have attracted the world towards it and new concept of integrative health care is emerging rapidly.

In the emerging scenario need is felt to conserve the environment besides adopting beneficial integrative technologies for cultivation and harvesting of the natural resources. The synthetic fertilizers and pesticides are also spoiling the soil ecosystem and responsible for pollution of the soil. In view of the above, it is high time to conserve the nature by developing biofertilizers and biopesticides taking leads from codified knowledge of Vrikshayurveda. This approach would certainly improve the yield and quality of medicinal plants and ultimately contribute for the production of safe and quality assured plants drugs.

Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS), an apex body in India is there for the formulation, coordination, development and promotion of research on scientific lines in Ayurveda through a planned research program that includes medicinal plant research (demonstrative gardens).

Medicinal plant gardens play a vital role in ex-situ conservation and help to conserve rare and endangered plant species and also ensure their sustained availability. CCRAS has initiated the steps for conservation through medicinal plant gardens at different geographical zones for demonstrative purposes which are used in the traditional systems of medicine. Cultivation of medicinal plants under Medicinal Plant Research Programme is being carried out mainly in four gardens located at different climatic zones of India viz. Regional Ayurveda Research Institute (RARI), Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh; Regional Ayurveda Institute for Fundamental Research (RAIFR), Pune, Maharashtra; RARI, Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh; and RARI, Ranikhet (Tarikhet), Uttarakhand.

The council is putting efforts for developing certain agrotechniques and tissue culture technique for medicinal plants through its research and development program.

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