Historical perspective of traditional indigenous medical practices: the current renaissance and conservation of herbal resources

Abstract

In recent years, increasing numbers of people have been choosing herbal medicines or products to improve their health conditions, either alone or in combination with others. Herbs are staging a comeback and herbal “renaissance” occurs all over the world. According to the World Health Organization, 75% of the world’s populations are using herbs for basic healthcare needs. Since the dawn of mankind, in fact, the use of herbs/plants has offered an effective medicine for the treatment of illnesses. Moreover, many conventional/pharmaceutical drugs are derived directly from both nature and traditional remedies distributed around the world. Up to now, the practice of herbal medicine entails the use of more than 53,000 species, and a number of these are facing the threat of extinction due to overexploitation. This paper aims to provide a review of the history and status quo of Chinese, Indian, and Arabic herbal medicines in terms of their significant contribution to the health promotion in present-day over-populated and aging societies. Attention will be focused on the depletion of plant resources on earth in meeting the increasing demand for herbs.
Herbal medicine is one of the main streams of every traditional medicine practice regardless of the different types such as Indian traditional medicine (ITM), Sri Lankan traditional medicine (SLTM), traditional Chinese medicine (TCM), Arabic traditional medicine (ATM), African traditional medicine and South American traditional medicine. Traditional/Complementary medicines practiced in Pakistan are regulated under Unani, Ayurvedic and Homoeopathic (UAH) Act of 1965 which has been amended to recognize the degrees Course. The practitioners of these systems have to be registered by their respective councils i.e. National Council for Tibb (NCT) and National Council for Homoeopathy (NCH).

Natural resources are open to exploitation from within and outside the country. i. Increased global demand of herbal medicines and current status Globally, there is a rising trend to shift resources from allopathic to traditional healthcare systems. The global market estimates to surge US$ 5 trillion by 2050. Twelve percent of Pakistani flora is used in medicines and more than 300 medicinal plants are traded.