



Ethnopharmacology: Ethno medicinal importance

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Received: 21-Jul-2022, Manuscript No. GJMMS-22-71827; **Editor assigned:** 25-Jul-2022, PreQC No. GJMMS-22-71827 (PQ); **Reviewed:** 08-Aug-2022, QC No. GJMMS-22-71827 (R); **Revised:** 16-Aug-2022, Manuscript No. GJMMS-22-71827; **Published:** 22-Aug-2022, DOI: 10.15651/2449-1888.22.10.174.

DESCRIPTION

The concept of Ethnomedicine is developed from the requisite for studies in the light of modern sciences on the drugs used in the traditional medicines. It is well-defined as the interdisciplinary science of biologically active agents traditionally observed by man. India has enormous ethnobotanical knowledge since ancient times. Origin of all such awareness in India is from the great tradition of Ayurveda. In phytotherapeutic approach, the emphasis is on the expansion of new drugs, whose extraction and fractionation have emanated based on therapeutic activity. The standard fraction of an active extract or mixture of fractions may attest better therapeutically, less toxic and inexpensive. However, crude standard preparations oblige modern standards of safety and efficacy. In 1989, World Health Organization espoused that herbal medicine is of great importance to the health of individuals and communities. WHO developed strategies for the assessment of herbal medicines and the same were ratified by the 6th International Conference of Drug Regulatory Authorities held at Ottawa.

The significant features of WHO guidelines are (WHO, 1993);

- The quality assessment of crude materials.
- The plant preparations.
- The finished product
- The Stability of the herbal product shelf-life, safety, efficacy, assessment, toxicological studies and the documented indication of traditional use and activity determination.

Ethnopharmacology is one of the world's fastest budding scientific disciplines encompassing a diverse range of subjects. It links natural sciences research on medicinal, aromatic and toxic plants with sociocultural studies and has often been allied with the development of new drugs.

One of the most widely mentioned species in surveys, *Ageratum conyzoides* (flowers, leaves, roots and whole plant) is used for throat pain, helminth infections, arthritis, fever, malaria treatment, dysentery, and liver disease. Studies have acknowledged this plant as carcinogenic. *Mimosa pudica* (sensitive plant) is used as cure for skin infections, helminths, urological disease, and toothaches. The rhizome of *Acorus calamus* is documented as a management of cough, cold, snake bite, asthma, rheumatic fever, and hemorrhoids. Though *calamus* is used in folk medicine (and in Ayurveda), this plant is deliberated extremely carcinogenic. *Andrographis paniculata* has been cited for custom in stomach pain, malaria, and jaundice. Another plant extensively referenced in ethnobotanical surveys, *Callicarpa arborea* is used for skin disease, leukorrhea, and treating scorpion stings.

The common pain killer morphine is derived from the opium poppy, and it also can be castoff to make drugs such as heroin and codeine. While the famous opium poppy has certainly proven to be extremely vital in medicine, it's far from the only plant to have medicinal properties. For thousands of years, people have used naturally occurring plants, comprising the opium poppy, to treat diseases and relieve pain.

Many of the medicines we have faith in today, from aspirin to morphine to the anti-cancer drug, Taxol, were derived from plants. The cross-cultural study of medicines consequent from naturally occurring substances like plants and fungi is known as ethnopharmacology. Even though these plants have often been used in traditional medicine for many, many years, there's still a lot to learn from them.

CONCLUSION

Many plant derived drugs used in modern medicine are advanced through ethnobotanical approach, which leads to subsequent ethno pharmacological studies. Scientific studies available on a good number of medicinal plants

indicate that promising bioactive constituents can be advanced to solve many problems pertaining to health. A proper ethnopharmacological search and follow up studies can lead to many more beneficial drugs. Scientific studies available on a good number of medicinal plants specify that promising phytochemicals

(drugs) can be developed as an answer to many health problems. However, phytochemical method of plant discovery emphasizes the development of pure phytochemicals as drugs and is affluent and time consuming.