

Constraints, Challenges and Opportunities in Herbal and Traditional Medicines

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At present more than 80% populations of the world relies on Herbal and Traditional Medicines (HTM) because plants have significant role as sources of medicines and at present more than 25% of pharmaceutical prescriptions in US have minimum one plant derived ingredient.

The use of HTM is increasing every day and World Health Organization anticipates that worldwide market for HTM will rise from \$ 62 billion to around \$ 5 trillion in 2050. Probably around 350,000 species (including, ferns, bryophytes, gymnosperms and Angiosperms plants) of plant exist in the world, among which around 3,00,000 species have been recognized and have botanical nomenclature, relatively small amount (up to 10%) of these plants are consumed as foods and medicines by both humans and other animals. It is possible that remaining will have great influence on human health if explored properly. WHO giving more importance for documenting the use of medicinal plants utilized by ethnic group from around the world.

Various developing countries have exaggerated efforts in collecting the ethno-medicinal data on medicinal plants from tribes. The assortment of legislations and regulating standards for HTM makes it complex to assess the market size for HTM across the world accurately. However, available statistics suggests that the HTM have more significant market in developing nations.

WHO officially acknowledged the potential of HTM and traditional health practitioners. Numbers of resolutions regarding policy, objectives and activities on HTM have been published by WHO. However, Rules and Regulations to restrict the practice and sale of HTM products to licensed practitioners, strict and mandatory registration of the practitioners, inclusion of HTM in essential medicines list, and pricing regulations must be considered. Development of programs, syllabus, scholarships and incentives, promotion of courses, conferences and seminars for professionals is necessary for development of HTM. Global collaboration in research and continuous education may play important role for exchange of information and skills related to HTM.

In conclusion the HTM should be studied, explored, documented, preserved and utilized for benefits of both humans and animals, ahead of it lost forever. This will need a holistic approach, and contribution of local populace, health care practitioners and research scholars and promoting training and education of HTM around the world.

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