

A Gentle Reminder about the Healthy Herbal System around Us

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Abstract: *The modern man spends millions for a healthy life. The technological innovations, medicines and the treatment methods developed by the modern world in the area of health were even intended to secure a healthy life but in a sense, cannot assure the same. The health experts repeatedly confess that the health is not up to the treatment we take up but up to the lifestyle, food, nutrition, exercise and the attitude towards life. The health secret of the ancient man was his life style connected and secured by the nature. There were medicinal plants as part of their life as food, medicines, perfumes, and rituals. It was not the resource on which they trust when they are at a crisis, but the very essential part of their daily life. The nature itself was his hospital, doctor and the treatment. The forgotten wisdom must be regained and these medicinal plants must be secured before the extinction. This article is about the wonderful medical system around which was forgotten by all but still there. It urges to go back to the nature and find the cure, treatment and a healthy life in the medicinal plants around us.*

Key Words: *Medicinal plants, Herbs in Kerala, health, Homestead farming, Traditional medicine.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

The health of the modern man is almost in a crisis after all these technological innovations and researches done on artificial medicines and treatments. The life style deceases like obesity, diabetes, cholesterol, Arteriosclerosis, heart deceases, High Blood pressure, are found even in each and every one. The chronic ones like cancer, stroke and cirrhosis etc. are becoming very common in our societies. Meanwhile serious issues arise one after another from unknown causes as virus and bacterial infections. The pandemics and contagious deceases attack the humanity without any mercy. The diseases attack the adult can be consumable but recently we find these diseases in the kids make us frightened. The recent pandemic Covid 19 have reminded the whole world about how insecure our health and life. People spent the money they earn in large scale at the hospitals and medical shops to survive this crisis. But the medicines they purchase and the treatment they undergo itself are not trustworthy and the severe side effects and after effects of these artificial health remedies make us to rethink to have alternative solutions. These situations threaten the present and the future generations and speak about how difficult will be to live in this world healthy and alive.

This crisis has given us a wonderful lesson on how importance we have to give to the sustainable development and how important our return to the traditional naturalistic way of life which gives importance to the well-being of each and every organism in this nature. The ancient man was healthy and free from many of the diseases of the present world. And that is doubtlessly assume that because of the nature they live in, the food they consumed, the water they drunk and the traditional and naturalistic method and system of medicine they adopted. The medical system of that time was not outside of their life or which they purchase with high prices but that which was around their livelihood. The medicines they found around their habitat and the habit of consuming certain herbs, fruits, roots, leaves and spices together with their food and water and the even part of their rituals and traditions made them happy, healthy and nutritious. They were with long life term and even the aged was healthy indeed. This fact of history reminds us and inspires us to go back to the traditional way and method of medical system adapted to the daily life with the medicinal plants and traditional way of daily healthy habits.

2. MEDICINAL PLANTS IN KERALA :

Kerala is considered to be one of the cradles of Ayurveda and siddha medical system and medicinal plants are one of its major resource spectrum. It is estimated that 900 of its plant species are with medicinal value and 450 are seen in the forest or in forest peripheries. Many of the medicinal plant species are used in a large scale in Indian Ayurveda and Siddha. But the tribal and local people who reside in forest peripheries know about a lot of lesser known medicinal plants. Of these, 540 species are reported to occur in forest ecosystems. Over 150 species of plants The major medicinal plants obtained from the forests of Kerala are Adhathoda beddomei (Adalodakam), Vetiveria Zizanioides (Ramacham), Curcuma Aromatica (Kasturi manjal), Alovera (Kattarvazha), Baccopa Monneri (Brahmi), Changalamparanda, Ginger (Inchi), Termeric (Manjal), Galanga (Kacholam), Fenugreek (Uluva), Naikumbalam, Tribulus Terrestris (Njerinjil), Coleus aromaticus (Panikoorkka), Boerhavia diffusa (Thazhuthama), Capsicum

frutescence (Kanthari), Mentha gravensis (Puthina), Dioscorea bulbifera (Adathap), Curcuma aeruginosa (Karimanjal), Tinospora Cordifolia (Chittamruth), Vitex negundo (Karinechi), Nagapathi etc.

3. IMPORTANCE OF SOME HERBS WITH THEIR MEDICINAL VALUES:

Herbs are very important in the traditional treatments. The Indian sages and pioneers of Ayurveda treatment has good idea about these medicinal plants and enlisted their uses and effects on certain ailments, sickness and poisons. Many of them can be used to purify our blood and diseases causes by impure blood and eliminates the metabolic toxins. A few like turmeric has the antibiotic power over infections of virus, germs and bacteria. They easily cure the simple cuts and wounds. A few are aromatic but also helps to reduce the flow of blood and mucus. The acidic effect in the body especially in the stomach can be easily solved with a few herbs. Many of the Kerala traditional medicinal practitioners use various herbs for medicines to act against poisonous snake bites and animals. Some are with appetising qualities other gives special aromas for food and stimulate the hunger and taste. Some are used as the raw materials for cough syrups and known for their expectorant property which prompts thinning and ejection of mucus from the lungs, trachea and broche. The blood circulation and cardiac stimulants are easily facilitated by herbal plants. There are few calmatives helps which relaxes the body and act as sedative. Disinfectant properties are also found in many medicinal plants and inhibit the growth of pathogenic microbes that causes communicable diseases. A wide variety of herbs is nutritive and rejuvenates a healthy as well as a deceased week individual. And these herbs can be easily cultivated in our kitchen garden.

Some of the importance of certain Medicinal plants is following:

- Boerhavia diffusa (Thazhuthama)- a. Reduces the stress hormone cortisol, b. solves the problems in the liver, c. useful for controlling Asthma and breathing problems, d. For the healthy heart and uses against swellings in the body.
- Curcuma caesia (Karimanjal)- a. Cures skin deceases, b. Uses against piles and asthma, d. solves the migraine issues, e. uses for curing rheumatic fever issues.
- Vetiveria Zizanioides (Ramacham)- The aromatic oil from it uses for freshness for the body. Uses against vomiting and stomach issues.
- Coleus aromaticus (Panikoorkka)- best paediatrician among the herbal plants cures fever among little kids, the worm in the stomach and cures the mouth ulcer in kids.
- Adhathoda beddomei (Adalodakam)- Purifies the blood , and uses against fever cough etc.

4. THE THREADS OF EXTINCTION AND FORGOTTEN WISDOM :

The new reports on the medicinal plants speaks clearly that many of the medicinal plants are at the state of extinction. The use of inorganic method and the artificial fertilisers and pesticides destroyed the natural elements of the soil where the herbs grow naturally. This is one of the major reasons of the extinction. The artificial pesticides not only intoxicate the soil but also make the elements of the herbs poisonous.

The deforestation and forest fire due to the carelessness of the human being and the climate changes is another reason for the extinction of herbs. The forest fire even destroys the seed of the herbs in soil and it causes for eternal extinction of these plants. There many other reasons like pollution, climate change due to the global warming etc. and by all of these the total number of medicinal plants are decreasing and many species are at the point of extinction. In Kerala where the natural habitat for the medicinal plants are very much attached to its geographical features, we find them in the tropical forests, in the areas and peripheries adjoined to the forest, and even in our neighbourhood where the soil is wet and fertile. According to Belind Hawkins author of the study, "Plants for Life: Medicinal Plant Conservation and Botanic Gardens," the extinction rate is so unmatched of the medicinal plants. In the words of Dr. Binu, Scientist in Jawaharlal Nehru Tropical Botanical Garden, Palode, Kerala also witnessing this heavy rate of extinction medicinal plants. And this causes the scarcity of certain plants for medicinal purposes. According to him even the simple cleaning of road sides by Mahatma Gandhi National rural employment Guarantee scheme is destroying the high amount of species and their seeds as they burn them after cleaning. This extinction and destruction will create many problems in the future for getting the raw materials for the traditional medicines and the treatment.

The extinction of plants not only affects the medical field but the academic field too. It eliminates the newer fields of the research. The researchers are the back bone of the knowledge world and many of the knowledge about the medicinal value of the plant species came to the knowledge of the world because of the continuous research done on the area. And these researches are now actually at the point of extinction as many of the field are disappear from the earth.

5. THE REMEDIAL MEASURES :

The medicinal plants can be brought back to the earth is possible only with the help of the continuous and sincere effort of each human being who is actually the greatest beneficiary of the same. In Kerala, the medicinal plants were the part and participle of each and every home atmosphere. Every woman was a doctor who performs traditional

medical systems with the herbs they find in their house peripheries. The knowledge of these medicinal values is transmitted through oral traditions and written inscriptions. But the women are given this knowledge from one to the other by the elders to the youngsters. As they grow up, the knowledge grows and they act according to the situation when one of their family members suffers from certain ailments and deceases. Earlier there were all the plants in the herbs and bushes grow nearby the houses or the compounds nearby. Each medicinal plant for each medical need was at the tip of the fingers. But the situation now changed into a very pathetic scarcity of the same.

KITCHEN GARDENS

The primary and easy remedy to solve these issues is to plant or let grow these medicinal plants in our kitchen garden itself. Woman who are aware of and uses these medicinal values of herbs will surely take care of them. The awareness of this forgotten wisdom must be imparted to them and to the young generations through various ways. The same must be communicated well and propagated through the modern ways of communications like videos, audios, books etc.

THE SEED BANKS

The seed banks play important role in scientific research on genetic preservation off the seeds of the medicinal plants. They are highly recommendable for the conservation of biological and genetic diversity. The seeds of the species which are at the finch of extinction must be produces in seed banks and shared in a large scale to areas where these plants grow easily and flourish.

Botanical gardens play an important role in the conservation of the medicinal plants. The botanical gardens maintain an eco-system to enhance the survival of endangered species and it promotes various researches on these plants. They construct a common condition which is preferable for the wide variety of plants and often contain taxonomically and ecologically diverse flora. They are also playing leading role in propagation and awareness of the facts about medicinal plants and their values through various projects and various programs.

THE MEDICINAL PLANT CLUBS

The medicinal plants clubs must be formed in the school level and included in the syllabus. Each school must have a medicinal plant garden and children must be encouraged and get aware about the knowledge of these medicinal values.

DOMESTIC CULTIVATION THROUGH INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

The indigenous communities are said to be the protectors of the reservoir of the medicinal plants and its traditional medical treatments. And various indigenous communities are living at the settlements nearby the forest and still depend on the collection of medicinal plants from the forest for their livelihood. They are also aware of how important these plants are. So, the cultivation of medicinal plants among them must be encouraged by subsidies and other projects to help them.

6. CONCLUSION:

The modern man has achieved his heights through technological innovations and the new knowledge about various factors around him. These new scenarios have brought him to certain new normal which he even not expected. Some has given them unexpected blow on his peaceful life and livelihood. The medical innovations through which he intended to be healthy and live long is one of them. The new artificial medicines and treatment he found out has brought him to the world of unhealthy life and problems caused through side effects of these artificial cures. The new treatment methods also made him to spend even his lifetime earnings to the hospitals and medical shops. This article reminds about the remedy for all of these which lies around him in the nature. The man must hear the sound of his ancestors to go back to the nature and find healthy life in the herbs around him. The daily life including these tiny little medicinal plants which grow around him may bring him health and may lead to a healthy and peaceful life which his ancestors enjoyed for centuries.

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