

Ethnobotany: prioritization and validation of new prospects.

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Editorial

Since ancient times primitive man utilized plant wealth for the fulfilment of daily requirements. At that time man lived in remote, natural forest areas and enjoyed forest ecosystem in the rich biodiversity comprising of various life forms including wild creations. He utilized these natural resources for a various purposes, viz. making shelters; making age old tools, body coverings; wild eatables (like roots, grains, leaves and fruits) and also for a number of medicinal uses. In this way, man compensated all daily requirements of food, shelter and cloths from the natural biodiversity [1]. Similarly he succeeded in the cultivation of various vegetable crop plants for dietary needs. By trial and error method, they practiced herbal treatments of different human and animal diseases. This information coupled with year's long practical experiences was inherited from one generation to other, in the form of folklore, which was kept as secrets [2]. It deals with the studies among the ethnic persons and rural folk for recording their specific knowledge about plant wealth and agricultural aspects of crop cultivation, protection and conservation in different parts of the world as evidenced by number of publications year after year.

Traditional agricultural practices as selection, cultivation, disease control, biological, physiological and pathological parameter are now showing very promising results hence receiving prioritization, recognition and validation everywhere. Interest in traditional wisdom and in the plants used and cultivated by the rural and tribals is increasing worldwide [3]. Ethnoagricultural knowledge has now been particularly relevant in views of new opportunities opened up by modern plant sciences. Due to rapid developmental activities, particularly in the areas of rich biodiversity, many wild species of agriculture crops are facing threat to their life. Not only crop plants, some of the low populated tribal people are also facing the possibilities of their extinction. As the natural death of the older tribal people in various tribal groups throughout the world, their conventional traditional knowledge and wisdom may also die with them. Keeping in mind these facts, it is important for us to gather maximum information on ethnoagriculture crop plants (particularly the crops preserved and often improved through selection), their mode of cultivation and method of possible varietal improvement and on-field traditional crop protection practices. Strategies should be developed for *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation of wild crop varieties and their multiplication through conventional and modern scientific tools like Biotechnology, Plant Breeding etc. Possibilities of cultivation of crop plants using degraded lands and poor quality water should also be explored through ethno agricultural practices.

Ethnobotany has ample opportunities for the future world over in recent years. Among them ethno-agriculture is notable one

which mainly focuses on unexplored areas of involvement of various ethnic groups in their traditional agricultural practices in different parts of the world. The greatest part of it is their socio economic upliftment through the agricultural practices [4]. Many governmental and nongovernment organizations have been actively engaged in crop specific research and taking adequate care of ethno agricultural aspects. In the past, ethnobotany was confined to enlist different uses of plants in human life and for this purpose; now a days ethnobotany is not restricted to the compilation of data from different sources but has undertaken methodological and conceptual changes for prioritization and validation of various new aspects of it. For this prospective, ethnobotanists of modern age attempted to produce the ancient relationships between living beings and plants through the history of agriculture and evolutionary ethnobotany. Agricultural history is as old as human civilization and evidenced by several ancient literature having written references of certain crops like Wheat, Rice, Millets, Cotton, Sugarcane, Spices etc [5]. It showed the importance of cultivated crops in changing the face of modern communities and depicts priorities of ethnoagriculture in the progress and overall development of living beings [6].

Ethnoagriculture is a very young discipline of ethnobotany and still developing in its concepts and dimensions. Concepts and relevance of this discipline requires full prioritization and validation for the successful establishment of their new prospects world over [7]. Traditional knowledge (TK) and Indigenous knowledge (IK) being practiced in ethnoagriculture and other allied spheres of ethnobotany on priority for the betterment of human life.

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