

# Chapter 1

## Traditional Medicinal Systems: Their Role and Place of the Strategies for Blood Purification in Human Beings

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### ABSTRACT

*Medicinal plants are a great source of medicine for treating various human ailments. Traditional use of herbal medicine, which was developed within an ethnic group before the development and spread of modern science, is the very basis and an integral part of various cultures. Different medicinal systems throughout the globe are still operational and use natural herbs for treating diseases. Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), Ayurveda, Kambo, Traditional Korean Medicine (TKM), and Unani are some commonly found traditional medicinal systems in use today. They are used directly, or their secondary metabolites are used as anti-bacterial, antifungal, immunomodulators, anti-hair fall, and multiple other purposes. However, their blood purification properties prevent blood from toxicity. Hundreds of medicinal plants are used in Ayurveda for blood purification, particularly plants which are astringent or bitter (pungent or sharp tastes). In addition, medicinal herbs do not have side effects.*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Medicinal plants from ancient times have been appreciated and observed as great gifts of nature. Their uses for curing numerous infections and illnesses have been found in all cultures from times immemorial. In the treatment of traditional diseases, naturopathic doctors prescribe medicines made from natural products like herbs, mixture of herbal components, herbal preparations, and flawless herbal products. The use of natural remedies for treating infections have been widely followed by descendants of most countries throughout the globe. In India, the widely followed traditional medicine systems include Unani and Ayurveda. In China, people usually follow and use both traditional medicines and allopathic medicine equally to diagnose, treat and prevent human ailments (Holtz, 2007). Several nations, especially developing countries of the world make use of traditional medicinal system for pharmacological purposes, and 70–95% of the population depends on these traditional medicines for their primary health care. In Mali and most other African countries, 75% of the people living there rely on herbs and their products for treating diseases and as a primary health care (Imperato, 1981). In preparation of these natural drugs, hakims or doctors usually use the entire plant or its different parts like leaves, roots, stems, bark, branches, seeds, etc. In addition, some of the remedies are prepared from excretory plant compounds such as gum, resins and latex and prove effective in treating patients suffering from several illnesses. Most of the people usually prefer to use natural remedies for treating diseases, and try to avoid the extensive use of synthetic drugs and antibiotics because of their associated health risks and toxicity. Scientists throughout the globe pay great attention in the use of these herbal preparations and products to treat people in order to reduce the use of hazardous synthetic drugs.

The use of medicinal plants for preparation of medicines for human use goes back to at least 60 thousand years as per fossil records and spread throughout the globe. In traditional medicinal systems, people use raw natural products and use them as a curative of different human sicknesses and infections. Different traditional medicinal systems operational in different countries like Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), Ayurveda, Kampo, Traditional Korean Medicine (TKM), Unani etc. make use of plant derived products or their different parts for preparing herbal medicines from ancient times and are still in use by most people. These distinct types of medicines have certain shortcomings and weaknesses, but they are still a valuable store-house of human knowledge (Fabricant *et al.*, 2001; Alves & Ross, 2007; Shi *et al.*, 2010).

In economically weak developing and underdeveloped countries, the strategies for use of herbal plants are mostly allied with sorcery and delusion due to lack of scientific knowledge about the medicinal values and therapeutic actions of plants. The live illustration of this is the Doctrine of Signatures, and basics of which are

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