



## Herbals - The Nature's Gift in Health and Disease of Man

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Since the inception of man on mother planet earth, man has learned to survive better with nature around him. The man has learned through experience, how to treat people with herbs and animal substances. However, there is no written proof about this fact but in every country the medicine man has always been an important focus of the society. By and large most of the people learnt the art of living by experiencing and experimenting, starting from Stone Age till date. They selected the herbs, which have to be used as food and which are beneficial for health and treating a disease for example an injury causing bleeding, they recognized the plant, which stopped the bleeding and healed the wound, Thus during the millennia the man has learned to use herbs as medicine and as food. The herbs are being used for preventive, curative as well as restorative purposes in health and disease. This fact has now been acknowledged and recognised by WHO authorities (WHO Traditional Medicine Strategy 2014-2023).

Today the situation has become disastrous due to manmade unnatural, non-ecofriendly life styles harming the very basics of natural existence. The Veda (Rigveda 5000 B.C.) describes the concept of four basic medicines, which are AIR, WATER, FOOD and HEAT ENERGY. We cannot survive more than five minutes without air, 15 days without water, 2 months without food and disturbances of heat energy can cause high-grade devastations (Global warming is one of the examples). Today man has made all these factors completely disturbed and polluted, oxygen level is coming down every day, CO<sub>2</sub>, CO, lead, sulphide, chlorofluorocarbons are increasing everyday in the air giving rise to respiratory diseases like asthma, bronchitis etc. Rainwater has been polluted with acid rains and with other pollutants. Surface water is full of toxic chemicals, viruses, bacteria and fungi, which are causing enumerable health problems. Deep tube well water is not good for health because it contains different nonessential heavy metals, which cause different ailments including cancer, Our foods are contaminated with pesticides, insecticides and herbicides mainly, organophosphorus compounds (toxic chemicals), which are soluble in fats, thus the ghee and butter contains maximum toxins, as our milk yielding cows and buffalos eat grass and fodder full of these toxic chemicals. These toxic chemicals are sprayed on foods also and some are used to ripen the fruits like banana and papaya. The World Health Organization (WHO) allowable limit for these poisonous chemicals is somewhere 0.01 to 0.1 ppm and in most of our foods and herbs it is many times more than these standards. India is yet to recognize these hazards.

Thus we are left, with nothing safe for breathing, drinking and eating and the disturbed energy system of heat induces biochemical changes in the body and help progress of disease. These facts have become common knowledge today as everyday in newspapers, presence of toxic chemicals is reported to be present in our various drinks and food materials. In spite of these reports becoming so common yet one will not find a single agency, society or government to take any step target rid of these life threatening toxins in our daily consumption. These toxins have not left our medicinal 'herbals and even use of these herbs for long periods can be life threatening. In this situation we should go for a revolution of making' India ORGANIC by growing our crops and fruits, free from these toxins. This is the only way we can save humanity. Some Ayurvedic herbs like Tulsi (*Ocimum sanctum*) (Singh, 1981) and Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*) (Singh et. al., 1976) which protect us from the harmful effects of the environmental pollution and ill effects of the toxins, but these herbs should be per-se free from these toxins and environmental pollution. Tulsi, the protector of life is the mother medicine of nature, is grown and worshipped in most of the houses in India because of its medicinal benefits. When taken orally as such or as tea it cleans the body systems from toxins, it is good for high B.P. (Singh, 1986, Srivastava et. al., 1986) and heart (Dwivedi et. al., 2000) protects human body against radiation, (Uma devi, 1999). Tulsi is a strong antistress agent - means all

disturbances in human body caused by stress are prevented by Tulsi. It is good for asthma, (Dixit et. al., 1986) allergy, (Kumar et. al., 1982) and depression (Singh et. al., 2010) and is a staminator (increases muscle and brain power), Similarly the root powder of Ashwagandha is a strong nervine tonic helpful in various nervous diseases helps even in prevention and treatment of cancer (Singh et. al., 2011), is also a strong antistress agent. These herbs not only make our life better but also keep us healthier if used regularly. They can even prevent the disastrous effect known as side or toxic effect of modern medicines, which produce side effects starting from headache, diarrhoea to death. Many other herbs like Neem and Had also have same properties. Thus we should be aware of these herbals which are our cultural heritage and have been responsible for sustaining the human race for millions of years before modern medicine (allopathy) came into existence only a century ago.

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