

Ethnomedicines, Ayurveda and Modern Scientific Research- A view Point **Syed Sadiq Abbas, S. Shabihe Raza Baqri, Agha Parvez Masih, Afroz Zareen Athar, Syed Faiz Mujtaba and Kumar Gaurav Bajpai**

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Abstract

Ethnomedicine literally means the therapies used by the group of people. It is being practiced in every part of the world since the inception of man on earth which later became a part of their tradition and culture. The ethnomedicine include all therapies which are animal, plant and mineral based medicine, spiritual therapies, manual techniques, exercises etc. are also included which have been used alone or in combination to diagnose, prevent, treat or cure physical and mental illness and to maintain well being. Ethnomedicine is based on theories, beliefs, experiences, practices, skills and knowledge. The ethnomedicines of the different countries like Babylonia, Persia, Egypt, Greece, Rome, Europe, China, Japan and Indian have their own different way of treatment including spiritual, physical and mental treatments, Ayurvedic medical practices are the most ancient known ethnomedicine of the world. It includes medicines of herbal, animal and mineral origin, out of which herbal medicine are still used by Ayurvedic practitioners and even modern practioners prescribe many herbal medicines which are experimentally as well as clinically proved to have efficacy to treat certain incurable diseases. Standardization of ethnomedicine is need of the time, because pharmacologically tested ethnomedicine can change the mindset of both modern practitioners and patient as well. Therefore scientifically tested ethno medicine can revolutionize the world of medicine.

Keywords: Ethnomedicine, Ayurvedic, Herbal, Medicine, Ancient, Modern practitioner.

1. Introduction

Ethnomedicine is the study of healing system used by particular group of people in a country or local area since ancient times forming part of their tradition and culture. Every country has its own ethnopharmacological aspects of medicine, however, there is no match of the Indian ethnomedicines, which were documented and practiced since millennia. The ethnomedicines of other countries like Greeks, Romans, Egyptians, Jewish, Babylonians, Persian, Chinese and Arabs hardly provide anything more than the ancient Indian medicines. The knowledge of herbs possessed by the aborigines of America, Australia or Africa is also not very great. However, the medicine man of every country cannot be ignored, as they were always helpful through their art of healing in various societies and countries. The ethnopharmacological aspects of medicines developed along with the primitive man who must-have used the herbals for remedial measure for his own sickness and disease, which he was able to procure most easily. During this period man must have experimented and did his first scientific work for his survival in the best way. Herbal drug development is a long procedure, which depends on its use for body systems (Sharir) the herbs have been used ethnically in folklore and native medicine preventive, curative and restorative purposes.

A Global review of Ethnomedicine in comparison to Ayurveda depicts clearly in the following description that Ayurveda and Unani herbs were the only scientific ancient medicine while other native medicines were rudimentary folklore.

A Global View of Ethnomedicine

AMERICAN INDIAN:

Native American organize community and family ceremonies which play a very important in heating process which include songs, prayers, music, dance, which together contribute healing energy to the patient (Koithan and Farrel 2010). Traditional medicines include herbs, animals and minerals A mask was worn by Shamans in North America, Africa and Southeast Asia. Black Cohash (Squaroot) has been used to treat arthritis and asthma etc.

EGYPT AND MESOPOTAMIA:

The most famous of early physician was an Egyptian, Imhotep (2780BCE) (Cormack, 1965). Archaeological evidences proved that humans have been using the healing parts of plants for more than 50,000 years for example Catmint and Rue have been used for digestive system diseases and ulcers respectively. Egypt is one of the oldest civilization and known for its art, sciences and medicine (Kemp, 2007) Ancient Egypt (3300 BCE to 525BCE) is the time when they were expert in modern medical care including dental treatment, bone setting simple types of surgeries and they used some sets of medical pharmacopeias (Nunn, 2002) the wide range of treatments included plant, animal,

minerals and metals etc. plants include, acacia, anise, barley, cassia, castor bean, coriander, cucumber, cumin, date, fennel, fig, mulberry, garlic, gourd, juniper, leek, lettuce, lotus, plass, proppy, seeds, saffron, sunflower, styrax, terebinth, etc.

AUSTRALIA:

Many plants were used for medicinal purpose like native mint (*Mantha* spp.) were used for cough and cold. Gums taken from gum trees used for burns, greens glue (*Buchanania obavata*) is used in weakness. Kangaroo apple (*Solanum aviolare*) is also traditionally used for treatment, Writtles (*Accacia Spp.*) more than 1000 spp. are found in Australia, bark of black wood (*Acacia melanoxylon*) was infused and used to relived rheumatic pains or consumed for indigestion and rheumatism, old man's weed, Drooping she oak Hop bush and many more herbs, are being used traditionally for the treatment of different ailments. (Gott, 2018). Australian aboriginal groups have initiation rites especially for young men that involve bloodletting, burning, caring of body etc. They have used Eucalyptus as an antiseptic and anti-inflammatory agent.

AFRICA:

Three levels of specialities were a part of the holistic health care system comes in traditional African System of medicine level one divination, two, spiritualism and third herbalism. Traditional treatment services are based on cultural and religious background, belief, knowledge and attitudes prevails in community. Treatment given for both natural and supranatural causes by physical and spiritual means animals sacrifice is also one of the parts of treatment. African traditional (medicine, knowledge is passed from generations to generation and a lot is yet to be documented (Sofowora et. al., 2013). 'Witch doctors' or Sangomas has treated African tribals. Shaman healing ceremonies were organise for treatments and doctors have used the cactus as a medicine.

GREECE:

Ancient Greek medicines were based on theories and practices. Ancient Greek believed that health was affected by geographic location, belief system, mindset, trauma, diet and social status etc. Disease was believed to be punishment while healing was a gift of Gods. (Cartwright, 2013). Greek diagnosis was based on humorism which was based on four humors like blood, phlegm, yellow blie and black bile, each of which was connected to an organ, seasons and element. Balanced state of these humors gives good health while imbalance of humors resulted to poor health. Hippocrates is known as "Father of Modern Medicine" (Grammaticos and Daimanties, 2008). Medicines used in ancient Greece were based on herbal and animal origin (Skaltsa, 2014). Hippocrates was a great Greek physician (460-377B.C.) who treated their patients with several herbals and henbane etc.

PERSIA:

Persian traditional medicine is one of the most ancient ethnomedicines of the world, which is actually preserved Greeko Roman traditional medicine based on 'Mizaj' (nature) of the patient and treatment includes [74] principal herbal, animal and mineral formulations (Rezaeizadeh et. al., 2009).

CHINA:

China (450-300BC) had a great deal in treatment as more than 16,000 traditional medicines have been prescribed in Chinese medicine, most of which are based on herbs. Ginseng is an adaptogen and now it is an endangered plant. Acupuncture (360-600 points in, whole body), Auriculotherapy (100 points in the ear),

ROME:

The Roman Empire established around 800 B.C.E. and existed for about 1200 years. They have used Fennel plant for the treatment of nervous disorders, unwashed wool applied to sores, Elecampane for digestive problem, Egg yolk for dysentery, sage, garlic for heart, boiled liver for sore eyes, fenugreek, for pneumonia, cabbage for wounds & sorer, silphium for fever, indigestion, sore throat, Willow as antiseptic (Yvette Brazier, 2018). Hippocratic medicines and added electrotherapy by Torpedo fish in cases of Arthritis, cupping therapy to draw poisonous substances from the body.

EUROPE:

In Europe the folk medical practitioners use plant, bark, root, leaves, animals, and mineral to cure ailments, like Chinese and Ayurvedic System of Medicines (Firenzuoli and Gori, 2007). Chemical medicines from plant Foxglove introduced in year 1785 for dropsy treatment by the English physician -William Withering.

JAPAN

Japanese Kampo medicines are being used traditionally contain 148 herbal formulations for the treatment of different diseases (Watanabe et. al., 2011). In 19th century Japanese physician used acupuncture therapy herbals and other medicines for treatment. Pulse diagnosis was the main diagnostic technique. Written record shows use of herbs in the treatment of several diseases (Park et. al., 2012).

INDIA:

Lord Dhanvantari is God of Medicine in Indian culture; AYURVEDA means science of life (5000BC). The Indian system of medicine which includes Ayurveda, the information is well documented long Charak (2700-600BC) and Sushrut were the great Physician and Surgeon respectively. Tulsi (*Ocimum sanctum*) - is a traditional Indian plant with anti-stress, antiasthmatic, antipyretic, anticancer, anti diabetic and other properties.

How Ayurveda Excels?

Ayurveda is comprised of two words Aayuh and Vedah Aayu is referred for the intellect and process involved from conception to death and Vedah means the acquisition of this knowledge. Therefore, this knowledge is an exposition of the healthy living of human beings. Any deviations from this course of life span would be taken as Vyadhi disorders. Disorders which if persists will lead to Rugnata disease/disability which leads to death if not taken care off.

This basic knowledge Rachnashareeri development of body described in Rigveda 6/6/12 is The Jeeva Gene ignites fire in water in presence of Vayuh the air and fills its Panch kosha five stores - Annamya The physical stores formed structures from skin to bone, Pranmaya - the vital store - Prana, Apana, Udana Samano, Vyana, Manomaya the executive stores -Manah Ahankara and five cognitives systems (eye, ear, tongue, touch and smell), Vigyanmaya - the scientific stores - Buddhi, Chitta and five executive systems (hand, legs, neck, urination and defecation, reproduction), Aanandmaya affection-pleasure, euphoria-disphoria.and reason form nature - by seven elements-Rasa mixture of various compounds absorbed from intestine, Rakta the process and mechanism of circulation of Rasa throughout the body, Mansa the contents between shin and bone, Asthi the matrix, Majja the omnipotent system, Meda the neuronal system and Virya the Purushah (the one who carries Jeev to make new birth - from Panch bhoota the five elements- Earth Water Air, Space and Fire and it maintains this configuration by consuming food.

This configuration is further enriched by five cognitive and five executive systems to wholly defend on its own without the help of pro-creator.

This makes a drop out of the sea of Vedic knowledge and is a sufficient example to say that such knowledge never has existed in Ethnomedicines of the world or modern scientific medicine.

The physiological role of Manah is either missing or ill-understood elsewhere then Vedas. In Yajurvedah there are Mantras which end with Tan-me-manah Shivsankalpamastu meaning that my perception should be equal to cognitive and interactive information or knowledge. Manah being the most important Dravya for the viability and health of the body and hence disorders of manah are the major causes of morbidity and mortality.

2. Conclusion

The morphology, physiology and psychology as described in the Ayurveda is actually a complete medical science in itself which is very rarely found in such detail in other ethnomedicines of the world. This is the reason why the whole world has come to know the unimaginary healing powers of Ayurvedic medicines/Ayurvedic herbal medicines. Therefore, we recommend use of holistic approach of healing with our Ethnomedicines, which are truly scientifically proven to possess preventive, curative as well as restorative powers in it.

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