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**Herbal Medicine in Pakistan: A Healing Tradition**

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**Abstract**

Herbal medicine has a long history in Pakistan and is based on traditional Unani and Ayurvedic treatments. These treatments, which utilize local medicinal plants and natural cures, have been vital to community health for many centuries. Because of the increased interest in natural cures, herbal medicine, which offers a holistic approach to health, continues to thrive alongside modern medical approaches. This therapeutic legacy is still a major part of Pakistan's cultural and medical landscape.

**Introduction**

Nature has blessed us with diversified ways to maintain our lives. One of them is herbal medicine. These drugs have been used since ancient times. People are fascinated by the use of herbal remedies to treat various diseases. In the treatment of several human ailments, all herbs have always played an important role. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), around 80% of the global population trust traditional medicine (Ajoseh et al., 2024).

Herbal drugs mean the use of different parts of the plant for therapeutic purposes. The use of herbal remedies is increasingly being popular due to progress in quality analysis and control and advances in clinical research express their importance in treating and preventing diseases. Herbal medicines mean herbs, herbal preparation, herbal materials, synthesized herbal products which have active plant ingredients, or other materials of plant, or combinations (Chaachouay et al., 2024).

From ancient times, native plants have been utilized in various parts of the world. There may be different kinds of herbs with a huge variety. They have diversified medicinal properties, allowing obtaining different herbal medicines. It is also called alternative treatment which includes applying a variety of plants and plant extracts for medicinal purposes.

In developing countries, it is a famous trend to rely on the traditional system of medicine. About 80% of the world's population uses traditional medicines. They use this medicine for their basic and primary health care needs.

As per one of the reports, approximately, 30% of the pharmaceuticals are synthesized from botanical origin globally. When we compare these botanical drugs with synthetic drugs, we notice that these drugs have minimum toxicity. They are usually without side effects. So, it is necessary to search for new herbs which are safe for use and no negative effects. It is sufficient to test natural products of higher species of plants under trial to discover new activities of medicinal plants.. It may provide a new origin of thrombolytic agents (Marques et al., 2024).

Medicinal plants are considered as a significant origin of new chemical substances. Botanical drugs have been well acknowledged and used from the beginning of time. Plants are considered a fantastic origin of medicines. Phytochemical drugs have pulled in researchers' considerations all over the

world for many years..These drugs exhibited minimum negative impacts. They exhibited encouraging outcomes on human health. Medicinal plants are utilized as a storehouse of various types of chemical constituents. They are also the origin of numerous bioactive compounds having different pharmacological actions.

Herbal medicine is an ancient healing method. It has been applied by ancient civilizations like that; the Chinese, the Egyptians, the Greeks, the Indians, the Mesopotamians, and the Romans. Hippocrates was the first renowned herbalist. He is called the Father of Medicine. He emphasized the importance of nature in medicine stressed the use of drugs in prescription, rest, and proper nutrition. Pedanius Dioscorides was a famous Greek physician who wrote a book named 'De material Medica' In 1597, English Herbalist —John Gerard worked in this field of study and wrote a book called 'The Herball or General History of Plants. It became popular in the whole region (Kropi et al., 2024).

Herbal medicine has contributed a lot to the evolution and progress of modern civilization. The ancient man observed available plants and appreciated the variety of herbs for the treatment of various disorders.

Herbal medicines had ups and downs throughout the ages. Most of the botanical drugs appear to have been manufactured based on trial and error methods. Natural drugs have been developed for centuries to treat many ailments by observations of wild animals, also.. The herb can be used as a dried plant or a particular component. They are used to prepare drugs in several ways e.g. fresh, dried, ointment, tincture, and oil extract. They are also found in liquid forms like infusion and decoction (Niazi et al., 2024).

### Herbal Medicine in Pakistan

In Pakistan, people use Unani medicines. Unani medicine system has a Greek origin. Pakistan people also believe in the homeopathic medicine system. In the northern region of the country, Amchies and Sanyasis use crude drugs as a form of Ayurvedic medicine. However, the Unani medicine system is the most used traditional system of medicine in Pakistan. In tribal areas, there is a lack of advanced health facilities. So, people are aware of local plants for basic health problems (Khan et al., 2024).

Pakistan is a developing country. It has a limited healthcare system. Due to poverty and illiteracy, alternative herbal medicine is preferred to treat diseases. As Pakistan

has vast areas and diversified regions, the botanical drugs are also diversified. Hence, several medicinal plants about 600-700 are utilized to make herbal medicine which is used to treat various diseases (Malik et al., 2024).

It is estimated that almost 6000 botanical species are found in Pakistan. Out of 6000, 700 have therapeutic value. The majority of Pakistan's people rely on therapeutic botanical drugs. Many research and educational institutes in Pakistan investigate the medicinal properties of these plants. Pakistan has great importance in the international market of traditional herbal drugs. According to sources, Pakistan is on number 9 in importing herbal drugs. It is on number 10 in exporting herbal medicine. From the business point of view, the commercial value of medicinal plants has increased in Pakistan in the last 20 years (Yadav., 2024).

In the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Laws, and Regulations about drugs were developed in 1965. Later on, they were amended in 1970 and 2002. National Institute of Health has a separate division between drugs and traditional medicine. It is named as National institute of traditional medicine center. It is an institution that serves for the development of herbal medicine. It was established in 1991. The Drugs Act of 1962 governs the rules and regulations of traditional drugs. Herbal medicines are utilized as commercial drugs and dietary supplements. The Tibb e Unani, Ayurvedic, homoeopathic, herbal, and any other non-allopathic medicine act is implemented to control rules and regulations of traditional drugs. The relevant authorities are responsible to look after the procedures of manufacturing and sale of these drugs. They also make sure better storage of these drugs. There are relevant regulatory authorities who check out the procedure of import and export of traditional medicines. The Prime minister and federal cabinet approved the Act. Hence, Herbal drugs are prepared, prescribed, and used in Pakistan on a very large scale (Khan et al., 2024)

### Conclusion

Herbal medicine is still widely used in Pakistani traditional medicine and is deeply embedded in many cultural practices. By using natural therapies and medicinal herbs, it continues to offer a useful alternative to modern treatment. With growing interest in holistic solutions, this traditional approach is still applicable in Pakistan's healthcare system.

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