

Introduction to Alternate Veterinary Medicine

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Relationship between plants and animals has been continuing form the immemorial. They together flourish with the help and assistance of one another. This relationship was analysed finely after the evolution of human civilization to a greater extent. The Rigveda describes a lot regarding the close association of human beings with the plants for treatment of their kith and kin (Ayurveda) and their animals using Mrigayurveda, the knowledge of which constitutes a relevant part of ethno biological Knowledge.

Ethno Veterinary Medicine is considered as one of the important alternate veterinary medicines for treating animal kingdom. Alternate Veterinary Medicine also includes (but not limited to) Siddha medicine, Homeopathy, Unani and Acupuncture system of medicine.

Globally, the resource poor rural farmers rely on ancestral flock herbal knowledge as alternate veterinarians also show considerable interest in the medicinal plants, employed in traditional systems. There is an urgent need to promote use of Ethno Veterinary Medicine on a wider scale since farmers having either one or two cattle, goats, sheep or chicken need affordable access to primary veterinary health care using cost effective ethno medicine at the earliest as these scattered livestock holdings provide subsistent income for landless laborers, especially farm women even in drought conditions.

This emerging trend in favor of herbal medicine is also due to the issues related to the antimicrobial drug resistance and drug residues in foods (milk/meal/eggs) of animal origin.

Rapid reduction in natural resources as consequence to the expanded urbanization, global warming and reduced natural habitat posed a considerable threat to the sustainability of traditional medicine which is completely dependent upon herbs apart from minerals and animal products, still, traditional herbal healers are practicing in several parts of the world where large ethnic community live in. In the last on decade, traditional Herbal medicine has gained importance in various developed and developing countries including India. The world of research has enough hypotheses in traditional herbal healers to carry out effective research programmes.

Aspects and Documentation of Ethno Veterinary Practices

Aspects of Ethno Veterinary Practices

Ethno Veterinary Practice covers ethno veterinary medicinal herbs using indigenous Technical Knowledge (ITK); ITK is regarded as the information gained over a period of time passed on from generation to generation. It is a community based functional knowledge system, developed, preserved and refined by generations of people through continuous

interaction, observation and experimentation with their surrounding environment. It is a dynamic system, adopting and adjusting to the local situations and has close links with the culture, civilization and religious practices of the communities. The communities have developed the indigenous knowledge system to conserve and utilize the biological diversity of their surroundings.

Ethno Veterinary Practice also covers information on where to find best pasture for animals, how to avoid infected area, where to find nutritious fodders. It implies practices such as bone setting, vaccination against pox and other infectious diseases, branding and careful management practices. It also includes beliefs of the farmers and traditional healers. It is advisable to have a close look at beliefs and encourage these if they promote animal health.

Documentation of Local Health Traditions

Indigenous Traditional Knowledge on health and treatment of diseases is very valuable and time-tested and has to be preserved for sustainable development of the society. Since many of such Ethno Veterinary practices have now become unheard, it has become the need of the hour to identify, validate and document them so that their advantages can be utilized by the coming generations as well. One of the important advantages of EVPs is their comparative safety over modern medicine. By propagating EVVPs, we can reduce the indiscriminate use of modern medicine. This is especially relevant in the context of antibiotics which pose the threat of antibiotic residues in animal products.

Moreover documenting and disseminating the knowledge of EVPs will help in improving the livelihood of traditional healers and it will also help in developing and marketing cost effective and safe natural medicines for the rural and urban measures thereby contributing to national income.

Local health traditions are practices, beliefs and customs related to health specific to each locality and passed on from generation to generation by word of mouth. They make use of surprisingly wide array of locally available flora and fauna. Thousands of specified talk healers are versed in methods such as pulse diagnosis, examination of urine, specific poison treatment and varma kalari, diagnosis and treatment being of all points in the body. The typical healers do not undertake medical service as a full time vocation, the typical healers may be farmers, shop keepers, blacksmiths or wandering monks. Traditional medical knowledge is also diverse and specific to each every them and classic community because of special characteristics of resources, health need and belief systems. There is large scale of erosion of local health tradition. There are fewer households working with home remedies today. The deterioration of local health traditions has a major negative impact on the access of local Health care which is very important. Pharmaceutical Researchers acknowledge that screening of plans on the basis of information derived from traditional Knowledge saves millions of dollars in the time and resources. The reasons for erosion of local health traditions are political, economic, and social rather than medical. Wild plants,

Wild animals and other natural resources are used by the traditional medicine are increased due to degradation of natural habitat due to over harvesting for commercial purposes,

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