

Ancient Indian Heritage of Medicinal Plant Research

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Abstract

Ancient Indian subcontinent has been the cradle of rishis (“scientists”), cultural heritage, and knowledge (Vedas), and has made rich contribution to the knowledge and wisdom of medicinal plants. Vaidyaka shastra, later termed as Ayurveda, had attained excellence in the field of surgery, and herbal use for protection of health and disease-freedom. Rishis were able to find various medicinal properties of herbs among others (minerals and animal origin) through their intuitional faculty. They also found that herbs could be used to ward off bad planetary effects on human health. Besides, they had developed in-depth knowledge of application of wonderful use and discovery of mystic effects of herbs, which involved tapping of potential of undeveloped minds of plant wealth. The ancient Indian rishis, even way back during the Vedic period (8000 to 1000 BC), had known that plants were living entities and have shown mental response to pain and pleasure. They had also known the fact that human body has subtle astral constitution and is likely to be disturbed by subtle external forces (Sun and Moon). They not only confined their contribution to human health but also developed the concept of health of plants called “Vrikshayurveda”.