

CHAPTER 1

MEDICINAL PLANTS: PERSPECTIVES AND RETROSPECTIVES

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ABSTRACT

Medicinal plants or medicinal herbs have been used for humankind to cure different ailments since long back. It has a fascinating history intertwined with the culture, tradition, and well-being of human civilizations across the world. Plants synthesizing secondary metabolites known as phytochemicals were identified to use in different therapeutic actions. These phytochemicals are essentially the active constituents present in different parts of the medicinal plants with immense biological properties. With all these attributions over the time and wisdom of human civilization, these special groups of plants and their products have been gradually elevated from their folkloric usage to modern medicinal essentialities. Phyto-chemical contents and pharmacological actions of the plants need to be reassessed thoroughly by means of scientific research keeping their efficacy and safety as the main focus. Both for biodiversity enrichment and increased human empowerment, widespread growing, and processing of medicinal plants is altogether necessary.