FUTURE PROSPECTS OF HERBS AND SHRUBS IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

India has abundant natural resources, due to suitable weather, climatic conditions as well as diverse regional topography. Natural resources of a country are of primary importance for the economic development. With the increase in population, rapid expansion of area under food and commercial crops, deforestation, extension of urban area, establishment of industries in rural areas etc, there is considerable depletion of rich valuable resources of herbs and shrubs, many of them being in the process of extinction day by day. There are many herbs, shrubs and trees, which have significant economic uses but are under severe neglect. Cultivation of some of these species is restricted to a small region in spite of their potential to grow in other regions. Our herbal resources constitutes more than 8000 spices and accounts for around 50 per cent of all higher flowering plant spices of India. About 1800 species are used in Classical Indian System of medicines. The use of plants as medicine is older than recorded history. There is growing demand for plant-based medicines, health products, pharmaceuticals, food-supplements, cosmetics etc. in the international market. Medicinal plants are accessible, affordable and culturally appropriate sources of primary health care for more than 80 per cent of Asia’s population (WHO). Thus in this present study, an attempt has been made to explore the future prospects of various herbs and shrubs having medicinal value.