Abstract

The origin of human life has been definitely influenced by the surrounding environment in various aspects. The peoples in the earlier times were more dependent on the nature to sustain their life. Their dependence on plants motivated them to acquire the knowledge of economic and medicinal properties of many plants and nuances related to plants. About 90% population of villages in this area still relies on herbal medicine for health care of anyone.

Many people of this area like tribals, medical practitioners, raika, often undergo a rigorous and extended training to learn to the names of plants, its uses and preparation of native plants. Ethnoveterinary knowledge acquired from Egypt, China and India as early as 269 BC.

Ethnoveterinary medicine means treatment of animal directly or indirectly through plants based remedies. This work done by traditional medical practitioners or medicine men. These traditional treatment of animals by plants or plant parts provide low cost alternative in situation where western system of medicine and veterinary services are not available or are too expensive. The discovery of uses of ethnoveterinary medicinal plants must have occurred in a number of ways, not only by the principle of trial and error mechanism but also through other ways which includes watching animals treating themselves by eating and rubbing with special plants when ill and subsequent adoption of the same remedies, communicating and interacting with other traditional ethnoveterinary medical practitioners.

Historically both human and animal medicine has realized heavily on traditional treatments and plant materials. The traditional theories or indigenous knowledge which is local knowledge unique to a given culture or society still forms the basis for agriculture, health care, food preparation, education, environmental conservation and a host of other activities. Farmers and livestock raisers throughout the developing world rely on traditional practices to keep their animal healthy.

At present time ethnoveterinary Medicine is challenging topic in medical science. Some scientists and development professionals recognize its potential as an alternative or complement to western style veterinary medicine. Still the development in
ethnoveterinary research is very young. Ethnoveterinary information is going to become extinct. In fact many communities use both local and modern practice.

The different type of ethnoveterinary medicines are used in different region as per availability of plants and peculiarity of vegetation. In India proper attention is not being paid to the traditional veterinary herbal remedies. Even the ‘regveda’ and eight division of ‘ayurveda’ the pioneer document with curative properties of plants have not provided much information on veterinary remedies. There has been a rich tradition and indigenous knowledge about animal healthcare in India.

India is now beginning to search her roots in the past and revive her lost glory of the traditional system of medicine which flourished here for several countries and contributed much to the development of the medical science of world.

The taxonomic profile of the ethnoveterinary medicinal plant species indicates that the shekhawati area of Rajasthan is a floristically rich area of India. Some plant products like bark, fruits, leaves, roots, seeds, stem and young shoots are utilized for treatment of various disease of animals like gastro-intestinal problems, maternity ailments, skin disease, external and internal parasites.

Most of the plant species are found having various therapeutic use. The largest numbers of plants are used to treat gastro-intestinal ailments, gastric problems, indigestion, 70 plants are used for maternity ailments, 50 plants are used to treat skin disease, etc. Ethnoveterinary medicine can provide an opportunity of new drug research for human use also. The present study indicates that Shekhawati area of Rajasthan harbours a vast diversity of medicinal plants. This study was carried out from July 2011 to June 2014. Almost entire area of Shekhawati region was covered and interacted with 86 informants for documentation of folk wisdom about ethnoveterinary plants. In this regard ethnoveterinary informations of total 265 ethnoveterinary plant species were recorded in the study area. Various types of plants, animal & animal products or minerals were used for treatment of various animal diseases.