Chapter-I

INTRODUCTION
Man's endeavours to adapt himself to 21st century have become a source of continued inquisitiveness and inspiration. Amidst technological explosion, efforts are on to identify areas of similarities, equivalence and ambibalance with and without natural resources. Alongwith the indomitable courage of the man to march with the fastest speed, his hunts for the past experiences are more pressing than ever before. It is presumed that millions of years ago, the human race of this planet become curious to know and investigate the surroundings with a view to choose best out of it to suit their survival, growth and development. The first evolution of the plasmodial soups of the human civilisation and achievements, there after, have basis in conventional experiences observations and experiments. These human observations have continued to grow, develop and co-exist either in the form of oral tradition or classical treatises. This fact can be commonly rediscovered in the roots of oriental systems offering professional services today (Alok, 1988).

It is an old saying that man is ancient creation of God Manu and has thrived for centuries for food on natural products. Later, he discovered various methods of preservation and promotion of health and cure of various diseases. Now there is new wave of insistent need to look for more and more healing agents. In this long process of human evolution, the science of healing depended on natural processes and their resource. Thus, the gradually developing experiences of man helped in selective intake of food articles and medicines to promote and protect life on this planet. At times, these observation have been rationalised for some sort of systematisation
'We come on this earth as guests of plant' is a grand old proverb. Since the beginning of the human race man has completely been dependent on their surrounding vegetation. The plants not only fulfill the basic requirements of life by providing food, shelter and clothing, but also give us medicines to keep the body fit and free from any ailment. The application of plants as medicines, perhaps dates back to prehistoric period. However, there is no such reference on record. The writings indicate that Chinese were the first to use the natural vegetation as medicine. The practice of application of plants, therefore, is as old as 4000 to 5000 B.C. Greeks like Aristotle, Theophrastus and others have given voluminous information about drug plants, in their writings. Dioscorides, has given in details, authoritative references, in his invaluable book "De Materia Medica," written about 77 B.C.

We know India has one of the longest richest and most diverse cultural heritage traditions. The climate as well as soil is most suitable for the exuberant and healthy growth of plants in this country. The Indian region harbours about 45000 species of plants, representing about 11 percent of the known plant species of the world.

A variety of medicinal plants occur throughout India especially in forests. Over 7500 species of plants are estimated to be used by 4635 rural communities for human and veterinary health care. These medicinal plants continue to provide health security to rural people in primary health care. According to WHO over 80 percent of the people in developing countries depend on traditional medicines for their primary health needs. In India, modern health coverage of rural population varies from 3-30 percent, which means that between 400-
500 million people take recourse to some form of traditional medicines as the only feasible alternative.

Traditional phytotherapy, a treatment with plants, was considered one time to be a more efficient than the use of individual compound. Thus, clinical trails become imperative to confirm the efficiency of plant drugs in their crude form on scientific background. The evolving field of phytotherapy is offering a valuable directional tool for studying native plants and their use in medicobotany. Scientists, botanists, therefore, should collaborate with local people and for promoting the discovery and marketing of new product and take step to revitalize the rural faiths in traditional culture.

It is also a fact that the sole of India lives her villages and the majority of population lives in rural areas, where adequate formal medical facilities are not available. With the increasing cost of treatment through allopathic science and the adverse effect of synthetic drugs, people all over the world are looking to medicinal plants for their health needs.

The cure of diseases and preservation of health are as old as life itself. All indigenous remedies, whether traditional or modern, have originated directly or indirectly from folklore, rituals, magic and superstitions. In other words, the therapeutic hints or measures hold key to the treasures of knowledge in folk medicine and native medicobotany. Native phytomedicine is kind of systematised and analysed traditional knowledge of folk healing in its own way. A large number of ancient medicines are still being valued for the same action and properties, the basic principles and practices surviving through ages, handed over form generation to generation, may be with or
without modification.

In terms or human health and welfare, medicinal plants play an important role, which have some special significance. Since time immemorial the use of the medicinal plants is in practice and the physicians of the ancient days had sound knowledge in regard to the identification, medicinal value and therapeutic use of herbal plants. During that time the each and every household provided with a kitchen garden and the entire folk was aware of the medicinal as well as the nutritional use of the plants and some of the plants were very common to the people so those plants were grown in house and thus it was conserved (Sen, 1996).

The agents which we name medicine and employ in the treatment of diseases are those which independently of any machanical operation, capable of producing changes in the structure or functions of the body and thereby nullifying diseased action (Misra, 1999). In old age, the people were keen to know the names and salient features of identification of the plants in use. They learned about potency period of each material and their self-life. In the present time, due to the population explosion, modernization, acculturation and unlimited deforestation, the habitational area is decreasing and the plants are getting lost. As the vegetation areas are brought under the project of expansion of the town areas the environment harmony is at stake and several hazards are coming into existence. To minimize that hazards it is imperative to us to plant more trees that an equilibrium can achieve.

Phytotherapeutics refers to plants which are used for diagnosis, treatment and cure of disease and other ailments by rural peoples including tribals and nomadics etc. Plants have been particularly
valuable sources of new or better drugs and new lead molecules for drug development programme. Use of drugs of plants origin i.e., HERBAL DRUGS, to alleviate human sufferings is perhaps as old as the origin of man itself on this planet. Plants with medicinal properties enjoyed the highest reputation in the indigenous traditional system of medicines all over the world.

According to World Health Organisation (WHO), as much as 80% of the world population relies on traditional medicine. With increased concern about rising health care costs, some governments are encouraging the use of indigenous forms of medicine rather than expensive imported drugs. This has been a strong driver for the resuscitation of herbal products.

Herbal medicines include herbs, herbal materials, herbal preparations and finished herbal products that contain as active ingredients parts of plants, or other plant materials or combinations. Traditional use of herbal medicines refers to the long historical use of these medicines. Their use is well established and widely acknowledged to be safe and effective and may be accepted by national authorities (Rajsekharan, 2002). WHO has defined herbal medicines as "finished labelled medicinal products that contain as active ingredients aerial or underground parts of plants or other plant material or combinations thereof, whether in the crude state or as plant preparations."

The turnover of herbal medicines in India over the counter products, ethical and classical formulations and home remedies of Ayurveda, Unani and Sidha systems of medicines is about a billion dollar with a meagre export of about $ 80 million. Three of the 10 most
widely selling herbal medicines in the developed countries, namely preparations of *Allium sativum*, *Aloe barbedensis*, and *Panax* species are available in India (Rajsekharan, 2002).

As a matter of fact, a comprehensive and up-to-date flora is an essential tool for the study of plants of any area and to assess their economic utility. There is also several local medicines men generally claim to cure certain dermatomycoses by using preparations. According to Schulte, (1963a) if we really want to discover new drug plants, such studies should conducted hand with physiochemical and pharmacological studies.

The Faizabad division includes Faizabad, Ambedkarnagar, Sultanpur and Barabanki districts of eastern Uttar Pradesh. It is located at the banks of Ghaghra (Saryu) river in between 26°40' and 27°50' N lat. and 81°4' and 83°90'E long at an elevation of about 105 m. above sea level. It has a peculiar type of vegetation because the nature of soil ranged from much fertile to usar. The climate of the division is monsoonic type.

The Faizabad division is inhabited by many backward classes and sheduled castes including nomadics (Natts and Banjaras), Dharkars, Banbasi, Kols (in Sultanpur), Harijans, Pasis etc. The villagers and local people of the division make use of many plant species to meet their day to day requirements including medicine and drugs. This eastern division of Uttar Pradesh has not yet been studied for its herbal medicine wealth. Therefore, the present study is proposed to explore the herbal medicinal wealth of this part of the state and to suggest certain conservation strategies for protecting herbal medicinal wealth of the country.
Plant originate on the earth before the origin of human being. Man is dependent upon plants for food, shelter and medicines for his survival on this planet. During course of evolution, people of different societies develop their own 'Materia Medica' on the basis of their long time experience mainly based on the surrounding flora of that society. After the synthesis (development) of modern chemical medicines and drugs such herbal drugs were neglected for a long time but only in the recent past few years, it is realised that herbal drugs are superior as these have no side effects and are available in nature in huge amounts.

Due to population explosion, modernization, acculturation and unlimited deforestation, the wealth of unique knowledge about medicinal plants i.e., herbal and folk medicines is losing very rapidly. Therefore, it is necessary to preserve these ancient wealth of knowledge by proper documentation before these are lost for ever.

The chief objective of the proposed work:

(a) To survey the entire Faizabad region of eastern U.P. for its medicinal plant wealth.
(b) To study the wild and cultivated plants and their parts used by rural, nomadic and local people of this area as medicine.
(c) To benifit the unknown persons (Scientist, Research workers, Phytotherapeutics, Pharmaceutical agencies etc.) about the folk herbal medicine wealth of this area.
(d) To up the socio-economic and cultural status of nomadic and rural people of this area.
(e) To suggest different conservational stratigies for protection of herbal medicinal flora of this eastern part of Uttar Pradesh.