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Changing Trends in Pharmacognosy

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Editorial

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INTRODUCTION

As we would all agree that Pharmacognosy was initially considered as a subject related to Drugs from natural sources, the base is same till date except the fact that, initially we used to study the crude drugs and tried to establish standards for the drugs, relate their chemical build-up with their geographical locations, relate their constituents with their uses among the various traditional uses, but now we have moved to give a newer direction to the subject like we are trying to Isolate the chemical constituents from them, going towards discovery of newer chemical moieties from them and so on.

Advancements in isolation and purification techniques with the latest technology for bioassays and molecular techniques have encouraged the modern pharmaceutical science towards analytical aspects of Pharmacognosy. There is a marked increase in research and development of natural medicines worldwide. Eventually, Pharmacognosy research started to emphasize on isolation and structure elucidation of biologically active principles from natural resources worldwide.

Now a day we see, cultivation, collection, authentication, identification, quality assessment, biochemical, biological and molecular studies of natural drugs are being considered as the main aspects of Pharmacognosy. As a result, the modern curriculum of pharmaceutical sciences has undergone substantial changes and Pharmacognosy has become one of the core streams of pharmaceutical research and education.

Another area which has opened new perspectives in Pharmacognosy is biotechnology. When plant cell biotechnology emerged as a new possibility for the production of plant secondary metabolites in the mid seventies, the pharmacognosists eagerly moved into this field. The aim was the production of known pharmaceuticals by means of plant cell cultures. In the past two decades such production of plant derived pharmaceuticals has extensively been studied by a number of groups all over the world. Besides the enormous possibilities of biotechnological production of pharmaceuticals using microbial, plant, insect, or mammalian cells, biotechnology offers also genetic engineering as an important new technology.

With the development of Biotechnology, Molecular-Pharmacognosy and Phyto-Pharmacology, Pharmacognosy as a subject got newer directions and the coming years will be see many more Pharmacognosists leading the Pharmaceutical Research.

Wishing a Disease Free World.