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**Ethnobotanical and self- medication: Boon or Bane?**

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**Statement of the Problem:** Ethnobotanical medicines have been a source of instant remedy since the ancient times. Every tribe has had their own source of therapeutic medicines solely prepared from the plants in their surroundings and therefore, majorly dependent on their geographic location. Although efforts are being made to bridge the gap between ethnobotanical therapies and clinical medications, we still have a long way to go. With the advent of technology, humans have moved further away from their natural environment and hence, clinical medications have become immensely popular. This has given rise to the use of over the counter medications all over the world. An effort has been made to list down the most commonly used over the counter medications and ethnobotanical remedies in the Kumaun Himalayas of Uttarakhand, India.

**Methodology & Theoretical Orientation:** 200 subjects residing in Almora district, an ancient hilly district located in the foothills of the Himalayas were interviewed and were asked to fill up a questionnaire pertaining to the frequent use of such medications. The objective was to ascertain the percentage of people who are dependent on either ethnobotanical or self-medications in their day to day lives. The purpose was to establish whether or not the participants or someone they knew had suffered from any side effects after the intake of such medications.

**Findings:** It was observed that people belonging to the age group of 50-75 and living in remote areas were more dependent on medicines of ethnobotanical origin while people belonging to 15-30 age group were heavily relying on over the counter and self- medications.

**Conclusion & Significance:** It is suggestive of the fact that capitalism about over the counter medications and change in the lifestyle may have resulted in lesser use of ethnobotanical remedies by younger generation. It was also observed that people from 30-75 believe that ethnobotanical remedies make for a better option when it comes to life threatening diseases such as cancer, jaundice and TB. Chronic toxicity is commonly reported after the intake of both self and ethnobotanical medications.

**Biography**

Himanshi Upadhyaya has her expertise in forensic toxicology and is focused about working extensively in the field of toxicology and forensic chemistry. Her work is based on unmasking the truth behind the use of ethnobotanical as well as over the counter medications. Her work is an output of in- depth interviews and personal visits to remote parts of Kumaun Himalayas, Uttarakhand in India. Her aim is to bridge the gap between the belief and reality of ethnobotanical and over the counter medications and to showcase the merits and demerits of the same. Her attempt to shed light on this incredible topic of interest might bring changes in our casual attitude towards such medications.

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