

Considerations for reduction of import of herbal raw materials required for Ayurvedic pharmaceutical industry in Sri Lanka

H. S. Sakunthala¹, S. N. Morais² and C. P. Sharma¹

1. Gampaha Wickramarachchi Ayurveda Institute, Yakkala, Sri Lanka.
2. Department of Social Studies, Open University of Sri Lanka, Nawala, Sri Lanka.

A renewed interest in traditional medicine in the globe provided new horizons in the field of Ayurveda related products in Asia as well as in the European region. According to number of estimations, Sri Lanka, a country with higher degree of bio diversity, possesses 7106 number of types of plants including microscopic species. Further, 104 herbal product manufacturers has been registered in the Ayurveda Drugs Co-operation as at 31.12.2000 who produce 655 herbal formulas with 740 types of herbal plants, but the trade is still a dependant of mass scale import of herbal raw materials.

Therefore the objective of this research is to study the methods of controlling the amount of reduction of import of herbal raw materials that can be supplied locally for the benefit of herbal pharmaceutical trade.

Structured questionnaires were prepared for the pharmaceutical industries, wild collectors and herbal raw material traders to find factors such as availability of herbal raw materials, both throughout the year and district wise. In addition data related to import of herbal raw materials for the years 2000/2002 were analyzed with reference to primary data obtained from concerned authorities. Information related to herbal raw material essentiality was considered a major decisive factor.

Data obtained were tabulated and statistically analyzed for the final graphical presentation. After comparisons of whole data two plants *mīguru* (*Zingiber officinalis*), *katuvēlbatu* (*Solanum virginianum*) were selected.

Hence it revealed that two plants have the potentiality and availability. They can be utilized locally to reduce amount of import of herbal raw materials for the pharmaceutical manufacturing trade. This may result in reduction of outflow of foreign exchange expenditure, as the quantities of imports of these two plants are fairly high at present.