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Editorial

Prospective Role of Eastern Medicine to Achieve the Goal of “Health for All” in Pakistan

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In nineteenth century, the world had witnessed remarkable advances in medical sciences. Overall mortality rate declined, expectancy of life expanded, lifesaving drugs discoveries augmented to control infectious and non-infectious diseases. The new advancement in technology upgraded the diagnostic procedures and manufacturing of drug dosage form design. In spite of such advances whether such advantages of modern medicine had been utilized by every human being? Modern orthodox medicine despite progress, finding itself in difficulty to combat and dispense with the ever-increasing diseases, disorders, malaise and ailments [1]. Therefore, majority of world population mainly in developing and underdeveloped countries does not have access to modern medicine and depends on dependable and reliable traditional medicine, many of these are valid and compared to the allopathic drug [2]. World Health Organization (WHO) in an international conference on primary health care in 1978 famously known as “Declaration of Alma-Ata” proposed the novel idea for the need to achieve the goal “Health for All”. In 1998, WHO incorporated a new global health policy “Health for All in the 21st Century” and set the goal to achieve health equity and equality, enhance healthy life expectancy and affordable health care for all [3]. Therefore,

the major questions still exist whether the goal set by WHO has achieved and materialized? Whether “Health for All” can be possible without scientific integration of traditional Eastern Medicine in clinical practice?

In 2013, WHO developed and lunched “WHO Traditional Medicine Strategy 2014-2023” and proposed to integrate traditional medicine in main stream health systems [4] e.g. Eastern Medicine in Pakistan to promote healthcare and to ensure the quality, safety and effectiveness of Eastern Medicine. Therefore, Pakistan with Eastern Medicine is blessed with cost effective, affordable, easily access, better physiological compatible traditional Eastern Medicine approach to avoid such problem and provide the basic healthcare to all.

The Eastern Medicine is basically natural medicine comprising of medicinal plants, animals and mineral materials of natural origin behind science and technology as compared to allopathic medicine of synthetic and chemical components. Eastern Medicine is a comprehensive scientific medicinal system indigenous to Pakistan. The term Eastern Medicine means “scientific, technical and medicinal knowledge for the prevention and cure diseases, ills,

and malaise as well for promotive health care which is prevalent in all countries of the Asia. The Eastern Medicine scientific, medical and technology invention culture has grown and upsurge in leaps and bound in Indus valley civilization. The Eastern Medicine has a very strong backing and the research system that has been developed with science and technology in many respects and in its own way resembling with orthodox medicine. The concept of Eastern Medicine is growing on medieval and medical holistic approach, and health lifestyle woven together.

“Health for All” achievement through integrating traditional Eastern Medicine into main health stream of country is coupled with many challenges from quality control of Eastern Medicine, evidence based therapies, Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) by manufacturer of Eastern Medicine, swift regulations by regulatory authorities, equal promotion of Eastern Medicine and provision of Eastern Medicine health care practitioners at all rural and urban areas of the country. Current situation of Eastern Medicine market potential associated with economic backbone would be able to boost up achievement “Health for All”. On other hand global market potential for Eastern Medicine / Natural medicine is increasing and expected to reach USD 115 B in 2023 and USD 500 B till 2050. Global market value for botanical and plant-derived drugs was USD 29.4 B in 2017 with a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 6.1% for the period of 2017-2022. Annual global Nutraceuticals market extends to USD 285.0 billion by 2021 at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 7.5%, from 2016 to 2021. The Euro Monitor report in 2016 has predicted that herbal medicine market alone will reach USD 3 trillion by 2030. As per 1998 World Bank Report, world trade of medicinal plants and related products is expected to reach USD 5 trillion by 2050 [5].

Despite significant progress made in implementing WHO strategy for Pakistan, the country need to continues to develop Eastern Medicine policy and regulations and integration into national health policy via long term strategic development and short term implementing policies. There is a dire need that Policy be formulated to integrate Eastern Medicine within national health care systems to regularize utilization of Eastern Medicine through its experts to operate in various capacities by appropriate presentation of Eastern Medicine experts including formation of health policy, regulation of Health & OTC products through Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan, maintenance of quality assurance through Quality Control Boards of all provinces, at lower level like District Quality Control Boards, Drug Courts, Provincial Health Care Commissions, including presentation to statistical division, economic division, statistic authorities for promotion of import substitution and export enhancement.

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