Challenge of trade and industry of Medicinal Plants in Iran

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Medicinal plants have been used since ancient times to heal and cure diseases and to improve health and wellbeing. Despite ancient nature of the tradition, medicinal plants still form the basis of traditional or indigenous health systems and are reported by the World Health Organization (WHO) to still be used by the majority of the populations in most developing countries. In this review, trade of medicinal plants in Iran was been investigated. Medicinal and aromatic plants (MAPs) play a significant role in meeting the demands of the traditional medicine markets which are found both domestically in the producing and in overseas markets. For example, herbal products can be used in the following product categories, Herbal medicinal products, Food supplements/dietary supplements, Foodstuffs and Cosmetics. Iranian exports volume of Medicinal plants in 1991 0.8 and in 2002 is 3.7 percent in world. The last three decades have seen substantial growth in herb and herbal product markets across the world. Rapidly rising exports of medicinal plants during the past decade attests to worldwide interest in these products as well as in traditional health systems. Global sales of herbal products totaled an estimated US$60 000 million in 2002.At present, 80 percent of the population in developing countries relies largely on plant based drugs for
their health care needs, and the WHO has estimated that in coming decades a similar percentage of the world population may well rely on plant-based medicines. Thirty percent of the drugs sold worldwide contain compounds derived from plant material which role of Iran is infrequently. As a result of the expanding interest in medicinal and aromatic plants, new income generating opportunities are opening up for rural populations. Also, the collection and sale of MAPs is providing a complementary source of cash for many extremely poor rural households. However, despite the fact that the products collected can have very high value in the final products, the collectors typically receive only a small share of the final value, either because they are unaware of the real value, are unable to market it in the form wanted by buyers or are unable to market to these buyers. Overall, in this research the proportion of import and exports of plant medicine in past, now and future in Iran investigated and its results release.

**Keywords:** Trade, Medicinal Plants, industry, exports.