



EDITORIAL COMMENT

**HERBAL PRODUCTS PROLIFERATION IN MARKETS: IS IT AN
AFFIRMATION OF HERBAL POTENCIES?**

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Several conflicting arguments abound on the status of herbal products in our society. As some have advocated for the promotion of herbal products especially herbal drugs, others insist that there is a need for caution since there are lots of unanswered questions, particularly on product content, dosage considerations and product regulation. Similarly, as some are canvassing for the substitution of synthetic products with herbal alternatives, some others believe that there is a need to establish a synergy between the proponents of either side of the divide, since there are undisputable advantages in fusing synthetic and herbal potencies.

However, beyond these contentions is the incontestable fact that in Africa, there is a strong inclination to use herbal products including herbal medicines. Undoubtedly, herbs have proven beneficial properties that can explain its growing popularity amongst the populations. In fact, current developments attest to this popularity as most consumable household products are now being sold with the brand tag "*Herbal*". Such products like body creams, body lotions, soaps, tooth pastes and hair cream among others, are flooding the markets and are becoming the product of choice for customers. Even choice products of the past are now being augmented with "*Herbal*" tagged varieties; which ostensibly, is an action by manufacturers to remain relevant in this era of *Herbal* product revolution.

Of course, the trend being highlighted is a welcome development, though many are insinuating that the ensuing *Herbal Product Race* by manufacturers is a calculated attempt to retain their customer base and to remain in business. This therefore, queries the motives behind the obvious proliferation of herbal products in our markets. Even though notable cooperate organizations have being in the business of herbal product manufacturing, distribution, promotion and sales, for many decades, never has the awareness and usage of herbal products reached its present day high. Can this trend therefore, be said to be a sign of growing confidence in herbal products and an affirmation for herbal formulations? The good news however, is the fact that this *Herbal Product Race* would surely encourage further research on herbs and companies may be compelled to provide needed research funding in order to improve the quality of their products and enhance customer satisfaction.

Obviously, the role of research in sustaining this glaring herbal revolution can not be overemphasized and the socio-economic benefits are indeed enormous. Imagine the employment opportunities for several classes of individuals in the entire line of production including herb sourcing, cultivation, harvesting and sorting; industrial processing and product packaging; and product advertising and marketing. It would also encourage innovative experimentations, product testing and post-product-use analysis. Most importantly, the trend would stimulate collaboration between experts in various fields of science especially botany, physiology, pharmacology/therapeutics, dermatology, cosmetology, dentistry and microbiology.

It is hoped that this emerging herbal revolution would not be truncated by anti-innovation forces; professional discriminatory tendencies, product adulteration and sub-standard product's marketing; irresponsible policy formulation and implementation; and indiscriminate tax regime/double taxation.