

ABSTRACT

Moral economies, the commoditisation of material medica and Tibetan Medicine in Ladakh, India

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The research will examine the dynamic relationships between the exchange and trade of medicinal plants, the medicines made from them and the practice of Tibetan medicine in Ladakh, Himalayan India. Much recent literature concerns the impacts of market expansion on the management of medicinal plants and on their potential to further both rural development and conservation objectives. However, detailed studies of the commoditisation of medicinal plants and medicines and the effects of shifting patterns of access to them for traditional healing are scarce, leaving important linkages between socio-economic change, natural resources and medical practices insufficiently understood. Building upon observations made over recent years in Ladakh and a broad literature review, this research aims to assess recent historical and contemporary processes that are shaping the economy of *materia medica* and to establish their likely implications for the future of medicinal plant management and the practice of Tibetan medicine in Ladakh. This will be achieved through an in-depth study combining anthropological and ethnobotanical methods. Outputs will contribute to debates in a range of academic fields and will provide data of value to policymakers and actors concerned with issues of natural resource management, public health and traditional medicine in the Himalayan region and beyond.