

Abstract

Soil is a natural resource and a mixture of many varied abiotic and biotic components, which give its true identity and value as the main component of the earth's ecosystem and a precious “skin of the earth” with interfaces between the lithosphere, hydrosphere, atmosphere and biosphere. The concept of “medicinal soil” is well recognized since pre-historic times. Nevertheless, full potential value of soil in the mainstream of either traditional or conventional sense has not been realized, may be due to lack of evidence-based research results. It supports, holistically, all kinds of earthly livelihoods, either directly and/or indirectly. The value of soil to livelihoods is comprehensively evaluated with focus on its raw active ingredients applicable in pharmaceutical, agricultural, health and cosmetic industries. In this manuscript, medicinal value of soil and its influence to human life is reviewed with special emphasis of author’s experiences from Kenya. To understand comprehensively the full potential of soils to human livelihood, interdisciplinary research collaborations and networks are greatly needed to discover the underlying science and spearhead the subsequent discussions with a focus on impacts of climate change and contaminate wastes such as e-wastes, heavy metals, chemicals and radioactive/hazardous materials on soils and their composition.