

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3171

ANSWERED ON:19.08.2011

CONSERVATION OF MEDICINAL PLANTS AND HERBS

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Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has taken note of a recent report of the Himalayan Forest Research Institute (HFRI) which states that India is on the verge of losing its medicinal wealth of rare herbs and plants;
- (b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the facts in this regard;
- (c) the steps taken/proposed by the Government for the protection and conservation of these medicinal herbs and plants;
- (d) whether the Government has provided financial assistance to certain Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) for the purpose;
- (e) if so, the details thereof during the last three years and the current year so far, State/UT-wise; and
- (f) the outcome of the review of the works undertaken by these NGOs?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI S. GANDHISELVAN)

(a) & (b): Yes. Himalayan Forest Research Institute (HFRI) has prepared the report on "Medicinal Plants of North - Western Himalayas : Initiatives and Achievements of HFRI". The institute undertook survey in different ecologically sensitive and fragile zones in the state of Himachal Pradesh. The survey in different areas of cold deserts in Pooh sub division of district Kinnaur, Himachal Pradesh revealed the presence of 114 medicinal plant species from the area. Out of these medicinal plants, 24 species i.e. *Aconitum heterophyllum*, *Aconitum violaceum*, *Arnebia euchroma*, *Bergenia stracheyi*, *Betula utilis*, *Dactylorhiza hatagirea*, *Datisca cannabina*, *Ephedra gerardiana*, *Ferula jaeskeana*, *Hippophae rhamnoides*, *Hyssopus officinalis*, *Hyoscyamus niger*, *Juniperus polycarpus*, *Jurinea dolomiaea*, *Meconopsis aculeata*, *Picrorhiza kurrooa*, *Polygonatum verticillatum*, *Rheum webbianum*, *Rheum moorcroftianum*, *Rhodiola heterodonta*, *Rhododendron anthopogon*, *Rhododendron campanulatum*, *Saussurea gossypiphora*, *Saussurea obvallata* fall in different categories of threatened plants.

The survey in Rakchham-Chitkul Wildlife Sanctuary, district Kinnaur (Himachal Pradesh) included the presence of 98 plant species of medicinal importance. Twenty six plant species of threatened categories were recorded from the sanctuary, out of which 3 were critically endangered, 11 endangered and 12 vulnerable. Critically Endangered species include *Aconitum heterophyllum*, *Dactylorhiza hatagirea* and *Saussurea obvallata* where as *Acer caesium*, *Angelica glauca*, *Betula utilis*, *Dioscorea deltoidea*, *Jurinea dolomiaea*, *Meconopsis aculeata*, *Picrorhiza kurrooa*, *Podohyllum hexandrum*, *Polygonatum cirrihifolium*, *Rheum australe* and *Taxus wallichiana* fall in Endangered category and Vulnerable species include *Aconitum violaceum*, *Bergenia stracheyi*, *Heracleum lanatum*, *Hippophae rhamnoides*, *Ferula jaeschkeana*, *Polygonatum verticillatum*, *Polygonatum multiflorum*, *Rheum webbianum*, *Rhodiola heterodonata*, *Rhododendron anthopogon*, *R.campanulatum* and *R. lepidotum*.

Further, the institute has informed that the threat status given to the plants in the report is as per the Conservation Assessment & Management Prioritization for the Medicinal Plants (CAMP) report of Foundation for Revitalisation of Local Health Traditions (FRLHT), Bangalore.

According to HFRI, the report is specific to the Himalayan region and does not give the national status. It only reflects initiatives and achievements of HFRI, Shimla in the field of medicinal plants research in the western Himalayan region.

(c): Government has set up National Medicinal Plants Board (NMPB) to coordinate matters related to overall development of medicinal plants sector vide resolution dated 24th November, 2000. The Board implemented a Central Sector Scheme for overall development of medicinal plants sector during the 10th Five Year Plan. This scheme was revised and renamed as Central Sector Scheme for `Conservation, Development and Sustainable Management of Medicinal Plants` and implemented since the year 2008-09 during the 11th five year plan. Many Herbal Gardens, School Herbal Gardens, Home Herbal Gardens and Medicinal Plants Conservation Areas have also been established in different states under the scheme.

Steps taken by the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) for protection and conservation of medicinal plants include: a regulatory framework through forests, wildlife and biodiversity acts for conservation of biodiversity and wildlife including medicinal plants; notification of guidelines under CITES and in the negative list of exports; projects on specific medicinal plants by setting up Medicinal Plants Conservation Areas (MPCAs); survey and inventorisation by Botanical Survey of India (BSI) of floral resources

including medicinal plants; and providing financial assistance for plantation of NTFPs including medicinal plants. According to BSI, many threatened species are conserved in Botanical Gardens associated with BSI and gardens associated with different universities / colleges under Assistance to Botanic Garden' Scheme of MoEF. The threatened species of medicinal plants are being conserved adopting both strategies viz. in situ conservation and ex-situ conservation.

(d) & (e): National Medicinal Plants Board has provided financial assistance to Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) for various activities viz. conservation, setting up of herbal gardens / school herbal gardens, IEC, production of quality plantation material, setting up of nurseries and cultivation. The state wise and year wise details are given in Annexure. Further, the Ministry of Environment and Forests has informed that they have established a Centre of Excellence on 'Medicinal Plants and Traditional Knowledge' at FRLHT, Bangalore which has informed that financial assistance provided by MoEF to the Centre during the past three years are as follows:

2008-09	Rs. 1,24,79,738/-
2009-10	Rs. 95,00,000/-
2010-11	Rs. 1,09,65,500/-

(f): Review of the works under projects funded by NMPB has been undertaken by the Project Screening Committee (PSC) of the NMPB. In addition to this the NMPB has hired the services of Agricultural Finance Corporation (AFC) for monitoring of all the projects including projects sanctioned to NGOs till 2010-11. As outcome of the review, the quality of the projects and their implementation has improved.