

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2592
ANSWERED ON:10.12.2012
CONSERVATION OF MEDICINAL PLANTS
Patle Kamla Devi

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether any special action plan has been formulated by the Government for development and conservation of rare medicinal plants in the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof, State-wise including Chhattisgarh; and
- (c) the steps taken by the Government to check extinction/smuggling of the said plants?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN)

(a) & (b) Yes. The Government has taken a number of steps for the development and conservation of medicinal plants (including rare ones), which inter-alia include, the following:

i) With a purpose of conservation and management of medicinal plants, the Government has set up a National Medicinal Plants Board vide Resolution notified on 24th November, 2000 under Department of AYUSH, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare. Important functions of the Board include Co-ordination with Ministries / Departments / Organizations / States / Union Territories (UT) for the development of the medicinal plant sector. At the State / UT level, State Medicinal Plants Boards (SMPBs) have also been constituted by the States.

ii) The Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) has established a Centre of Excellence on Medicinal Plants and Traditional Knowledge at Foundation for Revitalisation of Local Health Traditions, Bengaluru since October 2002. The Ministry has so far provided approximately Rs.8.0 crore to this Centre to generate and disseminate knowledge related to conservation of medicinal plants and traditional knowledge.

iii) Operationalizing the Global Environment Facility (GEF) – Government of India (GoI) - United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Project entitled 'Mainstreaming Conservation and Sustainable Use of Medicinal Plants Diversity in three Indian States' which is being implemented in Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Uttarakhand.

iv) To conserve plant diversity in general and protect the rare species in particular, habitat improvement is the primary measure. For this purpose, Protected Area Network that include 102 National Parks, 515 Wildlife Sanctuaries, 47 Conservation Reserves and 4 Community Reserves have been established. These areas receive additional protection under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. Further, 18 Biosphere Reserves have also been established for landscape conservation.

v) Establishing a network of 108 Medicinal Plant Conservation Areas (MPCAs) focused on conservation of prioritized wild medicinal plants occurring in different regions of the country across 12 States with technical support from FRLHT. The State-wise list of MPCAs, including 7 MPCAs in Chhattisgarh, is given in the Annexure.

vi) BSI has brought a number of threatened plants including rare medicinal plants under cultivation in its Acharya Jagdish Chandra Bose Indian Botanic Garden at Howrah, Botanic Garden of Indian Republic, Noida and associated botanic gardens of its regional centers for their ex-situ conservation. In addition to these, a number of Botanic Gardens associated with Universities/Institutes have also successfully conserved/multiplied several threatened plants with the help of the ministry under its "Assistance to Botanic Gardens" scheme.

(c) Prevention of smuggling of medicinal plants and their protection are done through enforcement of the Indian Forest Act, 1927; Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972; Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980; Environment (Protection) Act, 1986; Biological Diversity Act, 2002 and the rules under these Acts. A Wildlife Crime Control Bureau has since been established to check illegal trade and smuggling in wildlife including medicinal plants.