

Title: Need to set up a research centre of medicinal plants at Jalpaiguri in North Bengal.

SHRIMATI MINATI SEN (JALPAIGURI): Sir, seven hundred different species of medicinal plants are available widely in the forest of sub-Himalayan range. These species are time-tested recognised plants for indigenous system of medicine like Ayurvedic, Homeopathic, Siddha and Unani system of medicines.

In the absence of proper collection, utilisation, research and development, these rare species remain unexplored and become extinct mercilessly by unscrupulous people due to their ignorance. Due to the agreement with WTO, the drug manufacturing units have been facing an acute crisis. Even the human right to obtain the essential medicines is jeopardised. Whatever self-reliance the country had is worsened due to National Health Policy and amendment to the patent law. Simultaneously, the medicinal drugs which are not on our record are illegally sneaking throughout our country, particularly from the hilly, Tarai and Dooars areas in North Bengal.

In this critical situation, I urge upon the Government to set up a Research Centre at Jalpaiguri of North Bengal for proper collection, utilisation, research and development of the vast resources of drugs which can generate employment and can fetch export earning.