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Title: Need to retain the Survey of Medicinal Plants Unit – Siddha under Government Siddha Medical College, Palayamkottai in Tamil Nadu.

SHRI S.S. RAMASUBBU (TIRUNELVELI): The Survey of Medicinal Plants Unit – Siddha (SMPU –S) is functioning at the Government Siddha Medical College, Palayamkottai since 1971. This is the only (SMPU – S) in the entire country under Central Council for Research in Ayurveda and Siddha (CCRAS), New Delhi. In this premier unit, Siddha Scientists and others have toiled selflessly, collected and stored more than 3000 medicinal plants specimens from Southern India including Andaman & Nicobar Islands. This is a rare repository of medicinal plants collected from Pothigai Hills and other parts of Western and Eastern Ghats supposed to be the seat of origin of Siddha Medicine. In this Unit, there are nearly 2,500 specimens of plants, animals, minerals and drugs displayed in glass jars as exhibits.

This wealth of information accumulated over the past several years is utilized by Siddha medical students, Research scholars, Teachers and Traditional Medical Practitioners. Several exporters of crude drugs from adjoining Tuticorin Harbour use this SMPU-S as a reference center to clear their doubts in medicinal plants.

Now, the Department of AYUSH and CCRAS have issued orders to give this prestigious unit to a private Siddha Medical College at Salem.

If the Government wants to establish a New Survey of Medicinal Plants Unit at Salem/Mettur, it can do so but not at the cost of destroying the Glasswares and Herbarium of the present SMPU-S Unit at Palayamkottai in the name of shifting. The proposed move of shifting the Unit has triggered stiff opposition from students, research scholars, Siddha practitioners and the public at large and they are at war-path since then. It will completely destroy the fruits of nearly four decades of hard work done by them.

I shall, therefore, urge upon the Union Government to intervene in the matter and continue to allow the functioning of SMPU-S at Palayamkottai itself and to protect the interests of students, research scholars and others associated with this unit.