

Conservation of medicinal plants: A look at efforts since 2000

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The government of India had set up the National Medicinal Plants Board vide resolution notified on 24th November, 2000 to co-ordinate with ministries, departments, organizations, states and UT governments for development of medicinal plants sector in general and specifically in the areas relating to assessment of demand supply, advising on policy, promotion of conservation, proper harvesting, cultivation, quality control, research and development, processing, marketing of raw material in order to protect, sustain and develop this sector.

For overall development of medicinal plants sector in the country the NMPB has been implementing following Schemes since year 2008-09:

1. Central Sector Scheme for "Conservation, Development and Sustainable Management of Medicinal Plants" aimed at providing support for Survey, Inventorization, in-situ conservation, ex-situ conservation / herbal gardens, Research and Development, linkage with peoples collectives like Self Help Groups (SHGs), Joint Forests Management Committees (JFMCs) etc. The Scheme is being continued during the 12th Plan.
2. Centrally Sponsored Scheme of "National Mission on Medicinal Plants" is primarily aimed at supporting cultivation of medicinal plants on private land with backwards linkages, for establishment of nurseries for supply of quality planting material etc. and forward linkages for post-harvest management, marketing infrastructure, certification etc. Currently this Scheme is being implemented as a component (Medicinal Plants) of the National AYUSH Mission (NAM) Scheme of the Ministry of AYUSH.

For increasing the availability of medicinal plants in the country, the NMPB under its aforesaid Schemes is mainly supporting the activities / programmes for augmenting the existing resources and cultivation of prioritized Medicinal / herbal plants species.

Presently, as such there is no region specific programme / scheme for the cultivation of herbal plants which are endemic to specific region. However, the programme of cultivation of medicinal / herbal plants is being implemented in the States under the Scheme of National AYUSH Mission (NAM). The Scheme is being implemented in a mission mode through Mission Director identified in the States. The State Mission Directors prepare the State Annual Action Plans (SAAP) for cultivation of prioritized medicinal / herbal plants which are being approved by the Directorate of NAM. NMPB supports cultivation of herbal plants by providing financial assistance in the form of subsidy at 30 percent, 50 percent and 75 percent. The endemic and endangered herbal plants are generally kept at category eligible for 75% subsidy, so as to promote their cultivation in a large scale. The 95 prioritized medicinal / herbal plants species under the NAM Scheme is annexed.

This information was given by the Minister of State (Independent Charge) of the Ministry of AYUSH, Mr ShripadYessoNaik in reply to an unstarred question in Lok Sabha on July 31, 2015.