

SPEECH OF DR. NAJMA HEPTULLA, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF MANIPUR AT THE LAUNCH OF NATIONAL CAMPAIGN ON MEDICINAL PLANTS & INAUGURATION OF ONE-DAY STATE LEVEL BUYERS-SELLERS MEET, ON 25TH OCTOBER, 2016 AT IMA HALL, LAMPHELPAT

Km. AK Mirabai Devi ji,
Hon'ble Minister (Social Welfare & Co-operation),

Shri Thaithuilung Pamei ji,
Commissioner (Horticulture & Soil Conservation),

Shri Th. Mohendro Pratap Singh,
Chief Conservator of Forest,

Friends from the Media,

Participants,

Distinguished Invitees,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

A very good morning to all of you and I consider it a great privilege to have this opportunity of inaugurating the National Campaign and One Day Buyers-Sellers Meet on Medicinal Plants today.

I am very happy to know that the Manipur State Medicinal Plants Board has been functioning as an Autonomous Body since September, 2005. The mission of the Board is to promote and propagate medicinal plants in Manipur and to attain leadership for the State in this sector and I am confident that it will certainly fulfil the aspiration of the people and give benefits to all the people of the State. As you are well aware, medicinal plants have been identified and used throughout human history.

The use of plants as medicines pre-dates written human history. Ethnobotany, the study of traditional human uses of plants, is recognized as an effective way to discover future medicines. In 2001, researchers identified 122 compounds used in modern medicine which were derived from traditional plant sources; 80% of these have had a traditional use identical or related to the current use of the active elements of the plant. Some of the pharmaceuticals currently available to physicians are derived from plants that have a long history of use as herbal remedies, including aspirin, digoxin, quinine and opium.

My son-in-law, Dr. Anjan Chatterjee who is neurologist in US has done research on migraine and cluster headache and developed a medicine out of plant and the medicine is known as Ausanil which cures migraines and cluster headache in just a minute. It is neither oral nor injectable. It is nasal spray and had no side effects.

The use of herbs to treat disease is widespread in non-industrialized societies. Further, the Indian systems of medicines popularly known as Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy are of great demand in the country and abroad. Therefore, medicinal plants sector has got immense potential along with sustainable agriculture by way of providing alternative sources of income to farmers. This is particularly true in the case of Manipur State which falls within the 'Indo-Burma' centre of bio-diversity spots and has over 500 Medicinal & Aromatic plant species. At present, the supply chain of medicinal plants is highly fragmented and makes it less remunerative to both cultivators and collectors. There is urgent need to address the constraints and improve the situation. This has become an emerging issue and a challenge to the Board. I hope the Manipur State Medicinal Plants Board will surely overcome the challenges in due course.

Many of the herbs and spices used by humans to season food also yield useful medicinal compounds. The use of herbs and spices in cuisine, developed in part as a response to the threat of food-borne pathogens. Studies show that in tropical climates where pathogens are the most abundant, recipes are the most highly spiced. Further, the spices with the most potent antimicrobial activity tend to be selected. In all cultures, vegetables are spiced less than meat, presumably because they are more resistant to spoilage. Angiosperms (flowering plants) were the original source of most plant medicines. Many of the common weeds that populate human settlements, such as nettle, dandelion and chickweed, have medicinal properties.

In India, Ayurvedic medicine has used many herbs including turmeric possibly as early as 1900 BC. Earliest Sanskrit writings such as the Rig Veda, and Atharva Veda are some of the earliest available documents detailing the medical knowledge that formed the basis of the Ayurveda system. Many other herbs and minerals used in Ayurveda were later described by ancient Indian herbalists such as Charaka and Sushruta during the first millennium BC. The Sushruta Samhita attributed to Sushruta in the sixth century BC describes 700 medicinal plants, 64 preparations from mineral sources and 57 preparations based on animal sources.

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that 80 percent of the population of some Asian and African countries presently use herbal medicine for some aspect of primary health care. Today's world is realizing

the importance of herbal medicines and side effect of allopathic medicines on kidney, stomach and liver.

When I was doing my research on heart soon after my Ph.D. in 1962 I worked on some alcaloids of Jatamansi and Rauwolfia Serpentina or Sarpagandha. In my family there have been very famous Hakims and we have been using herbs for treatment of common cold or other ailments.

I am also very happy to know that within a short period of its existence, Manipur State Medicinal Plants Board has organized several Workshops and Health Fairs for promotion of Medicinal & Aromatic Plants and Healing system. To name a few, the Board has organized National Workshop on Conservation & Commercialization of Medicinal Aromatic Plants in 2007, Comprehensive Health Fair in 2009, Stakeholder Meet on Traditional Healing System of Medicinal & Aromatic Plants in 2010, three-day National Workshop on Sustainable Management and Commercialization of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants in 2013.

I hope the objectives of this campaign such as market authorization of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants and its products, good cultivation and collection practices, institutional linkages for promoting production and marketing of medicinal & Aromatic plants, to bridge the gap between buyers and sellers, agro-technology of selected potential Medicinal & Aromatic Plants and scope of post-harvest management of Medicinal & Aromatic Plants will surely achieve the target and translate into large scale benefit to the people of the State. I would also like to extend my appreciation to all the Officers and Staff of both AYUSH and the Board for their tireless efforts for the cause of the people of this State.

I thank the organizers for inviting me to this important function and wish the campaign a grand success.

Thank you,

Jai Hind.