

Task Force appointed by the Government, 4896 patent references were found on the medicinal plants at the international level which increased to 15,000 in the year 2003. However, in a study carried out in the year 2005, the number of patents found on medicinal plants at a global level were 35,587. After successfully fighting the wrong patents granted at United States Patents and Trademarks Office (USPTO) on turmeric and basmati, and at European Patent Office (EPO) on neem, traditional Knowledge Digital Library database has been created, since fighting the wrong patents at International Patent Offices is expensive and time consuming. TKDL establishes prior art for approximately 2.04 lakh formulations transcribed in five international languages, namely, English, French, German, Spanish and Japanese and prevents the grant of wrong patents, if claimed at the International Patent Offices.

The access to TKDL database has been given to the European Patent Office in February, 2009 for its use in search and examination process so that wrong patents are not granted. Efforts are being made to give access to the TKDL database to other major patent offices also so as to prevent the grant of wrong patents in these offices also.

(d) Yes.

‘Clusters’ for promotion of medicinal plants

2331. SHRI N.K. SINGH: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry has decided to develop ‘clusters’ across the country on the lines of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) to promote medicinal and herbal plants;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the locations have been identified where such clusters would be developed and State Governments agreed to provide necessary infrastructure, etc.; and

(d) if so, to what extent the growth of medicinal and herbal plants is expected during the next few years?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD): (a) and (b) Government has approved a Central Sector Scheme *viz* “Scheme for Development of AYUSH Clusters.” Objectives of the scheme are:—

- (i) To fill in the critical gaps in the sector especially related to standardization, quality assurance and control, productivity, marketing, infrastructure and capacity building through a cluster based approach.
- (ii) To encourage the level of organization in the sector thereby creating social capital for sustainability of collective initiatives.

Financial assistance upto a maximum of Rs. 10 crores is admissible to each cluster for setting up quality testing laboratory and common processing facilities and thereby impart quality and standardization in the AYUSH sector. Government has also approved a scheme *viz*.

“Centrally Sponsored Scheme of National Mission on Medicinal Plants” being implemented by National Medicinal Plants Board, Department of Ayush. The Scheme seeks to support cultivation of prioritized medicinal plants in clusters through farmers/growers organized into self-help groups, cooperatives etc. alongwith pre and post harvest infrastructure for processing and marketing.

(c) and (d) Government has approved setting up 10 clusters during the Eleventh Plan. So far, 6 (six) clusters have been approved in the States of Kerala, Punjab, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka. These clusters are being developed on PPP (Public Private Partnership) basis and State Governments are not required to provide infrastructure.

Under the Scheme of National Mission on Medicinal Plants, financial assistance is being provided for setting up of nurseries, cultivation, Post Harvest Management and marketing. Government has sanctioned action plans of the State of Andhra Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim, Rajasthan, West Bengal, Orissa, Arunachal Pradesh, Haryana, Kerala, Mizoram, Tamil Nadu, Nagaland, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Jharkhand at a total outlay of Rs. 80.34 crores during the year 2009-10. An area of 80,000-1,00,000 hac. is anticipated to be covered under cultivation of medicinal plants during the Eleventh Plan which is expected to translate into an additional production of 2.5 lacs tons of raw material for the AYUSH industry.

Health care spending by Government

2332. PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether pharma industry players have pointed out that Government should scale up spending on pharma industry and also take measures conducive to research and development;

(b) if so, whether industry has urged Government to speed up pharmaceutical policy especially when PM is pro-research and pharma products did not encourage the companies to spend heavily on research and development;

(c) if so, whether they have suggested that Government should work towards monopoly free environment and increase its spending on health care from 1 per cent to at least 3 per cent; and

(d) if so, the steps and measures Government proposes to take?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD): (a) to (d) Department of Pharmaceuticals, Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers had, on the request of major pharmaceuticals associations, recommended to the Department of Revenue for inclusion of the following in the Union Budget 2009-10:—

- (i) to extend the date for approval by Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (DSIR) by 10 years *i.e.* up to 31.03.2017 for obtaining 100% deduction from income tax to any Indian company carrying out scientific research and development under Section 80-IB(8A). Further, this section should not be restricted to only Indian Companies.