

Chintan Shivir on Medicinal Plants charts roadmap for strengthening value chain, boosting farmer income and enhancing global competitiveness of AYUSH sector

Day-long deliberations by government, industry, academia and states focus on cultivation, traceability, certification and best practices in medicinal plants

NMPB's 25-year journey showcased; CEOs Conclave and RCFC–SMPB presentations highlight way forward for a sustainable and inclusive medicinal plants ecosystem

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The National Medicinal Plants Board (NMPB), Ministry of Ayush, organised a day-long Chintan Shivir on Medicinal Plants at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi today, bringing together senior officials, experts, industry leaders, researchers and state representatives for focused deliberations on policy, implementation and innovation in the medicinal plants sector.

Building on the inaugural session led by Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Ayush and Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare, Shri Prataprao Jadhav, the Shivir carried forward intensive discussions across technical sessions, panel discussions, a CEOs Conclave and best-practices presentations by Regional cum Facilitation Centres (RCFCs) and State Medicinal Plants Boards (SMPBs).

The programme, which also marked 25 years of NMPB, aimed at strengthening the entire value chain—from conservation and cultivation to processing, trade and export—through coordinated action by the Union and state governments, industry and farmers.

Participants deliberated on themes such as the role of government in sectoral development, supply-chain and traceability, organic certification and insurance, and best practices for upscaling successful models across the country.

Technical sessions on policy, schemes and implementation in the first technical session on “Role of Government in Development of Medicinal Plants Sector”, chaired by Ms. Shomita Biswas, Retd. PCCF, experts highlighted the centrality of medicinal plants in Ayurveda and other Ayush systems as well as in public health and rural livelihoods.

Prof. Vd. Rabinarayan Acharya, Director General, CCRAS, spoke on the role of medicinal plants in Ayurveda, underlining the need to conserve medicinal flora, promote evidence-based use and link traditional knowledge with contemporary research.

The session outlined the ongoing and proposed schemes of NMPB to support cultivation, conservation and value addition, with a detailed presentation by Dr. Kavita Tyagi from NMPB on support mechanisms available to states, RCFCs and farmers.

Representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, including Dr. Rohit Bisht, Deputy Commissioner (Horticulture), and Ms. Alka Tewari, Director, elaborated on schemes for cultivation and related activities for medicinal plants, emphasising convergence with existing horticulture and allied sector programmes.

Dr. Sujana Pal, Nodal Coordinator, RCFC-South, explained the monitoring procedures for NMPB-supported projects, underscoring transparency, timely reporting and outcome-oriented evaluation; the session concluded with an open house discussion and chairperson's remarks summarising key recommendations.

Focus on supply-chain, industry linkages and traceability

The second technical session, organised as a panel discussion on “Supply-Chain, Industry-Linkages and Traceability of Medicinal Plants”, was chaired by Dr. Deep Narayan Pandey, Retd. PCCF (Head of Forest Force), Rajasthan, with co-chairs Dr. Ranjeet Puranik, MD, Dhootpapeshwar and Shri Naveen Kumar Patle, Additional Commissioner (Hort. Fruit), Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare.

Moderated by Shri Saurabh Sharma, Manager (Marketing & Trade), NMPB, the session brought together representatives from state boards, academia and industry to discuss practical solutions for strengthening market access and ensuring quality.

Panelists Dr. T.K. Hrideek (CEO, SMPB & Oushadhi), Dr. Sumer Singh (IIT Delhi), Dr. Virendra Singh (Pidilite India), Dr. Vinod Kumar (Himalaya Wellness) and Dr. Pankaj Raturi (Dabur, Ghaziabad) reflected on current challenges in procurement, aggregation and standardisation of raw material, and underlined the importance of robust traceability systems to build industry and consumer confidence.

The panel emphasised developing farmer–industry linkages, promoting contract farming under fair and transparent terms, and leveraging digital platforms to track origin, quality and movement of medicinal plant raw material from farm to finished product.

Organic certification, insurance and trade facilitation

The third technical session, also in panel format, addressed “Organic Certification, Insurance & Facilitating Trade of Medicinal Plants”, recognising that quality assurance and risk mitigation are critical to scaling up the sector.

Chaired by Dr. J.L.N. Sastry, CEO, JATAS Herbs Ltd., with co-chairs Shri Shirish Aggarwal, Retd. PCCF, and Dr. T. Sekar, IGNTU, Madhya Pradesh, the session was moderated by Dr. Abdul Qayum, Deputy CEO, NMPB.

Panelists included Dr. Vineeta Sudhanshu, GM, APEDA; Shri Bhuvnesh Pratap Singh, Director (NSWS), Ministry of Commerce; Shri Chandrajit Chatterjee, Director, PMFBY, Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare; and Dr. Ashish Mukherjee, Director, DMI, Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare.

They highlighted pathways to promote organic certification of medicinal plant cultivation, align domestic standards with global requirements, and use national single-window systems to ease approvals and trade-related clearances.

The discussions also covered the need for tailored insurance products for medicinal plants under existing schemes and better access to market information to support farmers and entrepreneurs.

CEOs Conclave: learnings from 25 years and future roadmap In the evening, a CEOs Conclave on “Learnings from Past, Future Perspectives and Way Forward” was held under the chairmanship of Dr. Mahesh Kumar Dadhich, CEO, NMPB, with Dr. Abdul Qayum, Deputy CEO, as co-chair and Dr. Chinmay Rath, RO, NMPB, as moderator.

Former CEOs and senior experts, including Ms. Shomita Biswas (Former CEO, NMPB), Dr. J.L.N. Sastry (Former CEO, NMPB) and Dr. Rajeev Kumar Sharma (Former Director, PCIM&H), reflected on NMPB’s evolution over the last 25 years and the lessons learnt in policy design, scheme implementation and stakeholder engagement.

The Conclave underscored the need to deepen convergence between NMPB schemes and national missions in agriculture, forestry and health, invest in human resource development across RCFCs and SMPBs, and harness digital tools for mapping, monitoring and outreach.

Participants stressed that the next phase of NMPB’s work should focus on climate-resilient species, community-based conservation, and stronger interfaces with the Ayush industry and global markets to realise the vision of a sustainable and globally competitive medicinal plants sector.

The session concluded with remarks by the Chair summarising key action points emerging from the day’s deliberations.

Best practices by RCFCs and SMPBs

Parallel to the technical sessions, a dedicated track on “Best Practices by RCFCs & SMPBs” was held in Hall No. 1, chaired by Dr. Mahesh Kumar Dadhich, CEO, NMPB, with an expert jury comprising Vaidya Sangram Kesari Das (Prof. & Head, GAM&RC), Dr. Sunita Garg (Retd. Scientist, NIScPR) and Vaidya Deepak Kumar (Arogya Bharti).

Moderated by Shri Sunil Dutt, RO, NMPB, the session provided a platform for RCFCs and states to present successful models and innovative approaches in cultivation, value addition, community participation and capacity building.

Presentations were made region-wise by RCFCs and associated states, including RCFC South (Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Puducherry and Lakshadweep), RCFC West (Goa, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Daman & Diu, Dadra & Nagar Haveli), RCFC North-1 (Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Chandigarh, Delhi) and RCFC North-2 (Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh).

Subsequent slots were devoted to RCFC North Eastern Region (Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura), RCFC Central (Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh) and RCFC East (Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, Sikkim, West Bengal), showcasing diverse agro-climatic strengths and locally adapted interventions.

The jury appreciated the innovative practices, including farmer collectives, nursery development, community resource mapping and convergence with other schemes, and recommended wider replication of successful models.

Valedictory session and awards

The day concluded with a valedictory session, followed by concluding remarks on the Chintan Shivir for Medicinal Plants by the Deputy CEO, NMPB, who summarised the key recommendations emerging from the technical sessions, panel discussions, CEOs Conclave and best-practices presentations.

In recognition of outstanding work on the ground, the Secretary, Ministry of Ayush, presented awards to the best performing RCFCs and SMPBs, encouraging them to continue scaling up farmer-centric, environmentally sustainable and quality-driven initiatives in their respective regions.

A formal vote of thanks was proposed, acknowledging the guidance of the Ministry of Ayush, the contributions of distinguished chairs, panelists and participants, and the efforts of NMPB, RCFCs and SMPBs in making the Chintan Shivir a success.

The programme concluded by providing an opportunity for informal interactions and networking among stakeholders committed to strengthening India's medicinal plants sector.

The inaugural of Chintan Shivir release can be read through the link:- <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2226284®=3&lang=1>

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