



## **TELANGANA STATE BIODIVERSITY BOARD**

### **UNEP – GEF – MoEF&CC-ABS Project**

### ***"Strengthening the Implementation of the Biological Diversity Act and Rules with focus on its Access and Benefit Sharing Provisions"***

#### **Brief report on “Telangana Herbal Healers Meeting”**

**Place:** Telangana State Forest Academy, Dulapally, Telangana. Hyderabad.

**Date:** 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> June, 2016.

#### **The Event**

First Telangana Moolika Vaidyula Samavesham was held on 6-7 June 2015 at TS Forest Academy, Hyderabad. This was organized by TS Bio-Diversity Board in collaboration with TS Forest Academy and Palle Srujana.

Meeting announcement spelling out the objectives of the meet issued by TS Bio Diversity Board is enclosed for ready reference.

Palle Srujana undertook the responsibility of contacting the Herbal healers and bringing them to the meet. Volunteers, many NGOs and other well wishers assisted in contacting the healers and the effort was spread over a month prior to the meeting. Though 55 Healers confirmed after personal contact, repeated visits and phone calls, finally half of them made it to the meet.

#### **Participation**

**The meet was attended by 24 Herbal healers, shared practices on 21 diseases and 115 herbal practices which include healing of animals were documented during the two day meet.**

The meeting was attended by experts from National Innovation Foundation- India (NIF), Faculty and students from Dr BRKR Govt College of Ayurveda, Scientists from Centre for Research in Unani Medicine, Ayush, Faculty and Probationers from TSFA and other eminent personalities from Hyderabad graced the meet and added immense value.

### **Documentation of Herbal Practices**

Documentation of the herbal practices was undertaken by Palle Srujana and NIF experts. The entire meet was video recorded and the knowledge shared was documented. NIF and Palle Srujana will pursue the validation of the documented practices.

### **Knowledge Sharing**

Herbal healers shared their precious knowledge with no airs, and with no inhibitions. They appear to have realized the fact that sharing is always better than not sharing. They also emphasized the fact that all leaves, roots and their extracts are first consumed by them before prescribing to any person who comes to them for treatment. Their precise methods to prevent spreading of infection are laudable. Ethical values practiced individually by the herbal healers on their own are of high standard and worth emulating by all doctors.

**A rough estimate of number of personnel treated for many disease and saved from snake bites etc by the 24 herbal healers in the last two decades could be around 3-4 lakh according to them.** This is an enormous number of people considering the small size of the healers and the small geographic area they represent, to whom they provided relief, saved life, made them healthier, increased happiness in their families and improved the individual productivity. Through this herbal treatment, the patients and their families have not become poorer as it happens with formal medicine. In no measure, their contribution to the Nation as a whole can be lesser than a surgeon of a corporate or a Govt hospital. Considering the fact that most of them deliver the medicine

free or at meager cost in itself a highly significant contribution to the society at large on a continuous basis.

### **Plants required by Healers**

Few healers found that some medicinal plants were deficient in their area. They have appealed to Forest Dept and Bio Diversity Board to provide them these plants or their seeds for growing in their area. List is enclosed. Palle Srujana will deliver them to the healers if these are supplied by any of the aforesaid Govt agencies.

### **Issues raised by Healers**

One session was dedicated to understand the various issues faced and difficulties encountered by herbal healers in practicing their knowledge. These are described briefly below:

- Supply of medicinal plants/their seeds for growing in their area.
- Recognition from the Govt or the Society for the services rendered by them.
- They leave their work to fetch the medicines and treat patients and do not insist on any fee. There should be some way of providing them subsistence allowance for the free services they are providing which would enable them to live reasonably well and continue to serve the people.
- Providing Insurance cover to the herbal healers by the Govt
- There is a risk and danger in practicing the herbal healing as even one out of 100 fail, there is a possibility of the people violently reacting to it. A suitable insurance cover to provide financial security net for the family may be considered.
- Recognition/Certification for the herbal healers by the Govt would place them in right stead in the eyes of the people/society.

- There are occasions when Police cases are filed against them. There should a method to provide protection against such situations and cover their risk.
- Pension/subsistence allowance/practicing allowance should be introduced to herbal healers.
- Treating them as partners in use and conservation of bio-diversity, healers may be issued cards for access to the medicinal plants in forest areas for practicing the healing.
- Resolve issues Forest Department have with Herbal healers, region wise or at state level so that they continue to serve the people with their herbal knowledge with access to herbs available in the forest.
- Formalized support in any for from the society to continue their healing activity.
- Utilize the local herbal healers to educate the school and college children on the rich bio-diversity especially about the medicinal plants. They should be periodically invited by the schools and colleges to interact with students and teachers. Even parents could be called for such meetings.
- Validated plants and medicines may be uploaded on an official website for the people and other herbal healers to know and practice.
- Herbal treatment should be recognized for medical insurance.

### **Way Ahead**

The stimulating experience of intense knowledge sharing during those two wonderful days is to be leveraged for containing our rich heritage of traditional knowledge, and facilitating the continuance of such wonderful healing practices to millions of people across the nation. This initiative has given us a confidence that if nurtured systematically, continuously and by the involvement of various experts in the system, it is possible to consolidate the herbal healers' knowledge,

bench mark it, certify after validation and allow the herbal healers in the villages to practice these healing methods to provide last mile health service to the poor people of our country. It would not only reduce the cost of the treatment, but reduces the financial stress on the millions of poor people, improves their health, reduces their pain with immediate access to the healers, and an environment of collaboration would emerge in the long run among people, nature and the Govts.

Few suggestions are mentioned below:

- Organize more Herbal healers' meets till we cover the entire state. We may plan one in each quarter.
- Pursue validation of the captured practices. Allot sufficient resources for it.
- Evolve a mechanism to respect, recognize and provide subsistence allowance to the genuine herbal healers across the state.
- Insist on interaction of herbal healers with local schools and colleges for knowledge sharing.
- Provide medicinal plants required by the healers across the state.
- Convergence of formal Ayurveda with the knowledge of herbal healers with an open mind with a view to synergize both systems for the benefit of all sections of the society.
- Celebrate traditional knowledge by declaring "Herbal healers Day". This may be celebrated once a year in each village of the state.
- Forest dept in districts/regions to interact with local healers on a periodic basis to understand their issues which are coming in their way to practice healing smoothly.
- Let us understand the fact that herbal healers are the carriers of our highly significant traditional knowledge linked with the bio diversity of our nation. They need to be preserved, protected, and facilitated to continue the tradition so that the future generations also derive benefit from our

ancestral knowledge and wisdom. We should resolve to give them their due.

### **List of Medicinal Plants required by healers**

Lambala Narsimha, Muktapur, Vill, Pochampali mandal, Nalgonda Dist

1. Nalla Pasupu
2. Vasa
3. Dumpa rashtram
4. Tella maddi seeds
5. Srigandham
6. Guggulu seeds

Bomminenei Yadava Reddy, Vill Nachinapally, Mdl Duggondi, Dist Warangal, 9010119234

1. Are kayalu
2. Nalla pasupu
3. Vasa
4. Dumpa rashtram
5. Tella maddi seeds
6. Guggulu seeds
7. Nelavemu seeds

### **PHOTO GALLERY**

**Two Day State Level Training Workshop on  
 Protection of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) &  
 Documentation of Traditional Knowledge (TK)**  
 by  
**TELANGANA STATE BIODIVERSITY BOARD**  
*In collaboration with*  
**Telangana State Forest Academy & Palle Srujana**  
 under  
**UNEP-GEF-MOEF&CC-ABS Project**  
*"Strengthening the Implementation of the Biological Diversity Act and Rules with focus on its  
 Access and Benefit Sharing Provisions"*

**Date: 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup>, June, 2016**







