

# **National Conference on Identifications and Conservation of Medicinal Plants of Union Territory of Ladakh**

**(21st – 23rd August 2023)**

## **Press Release of Day 1:**

The National Conference on Identification and Conservation of Medicinal Plants of Union Territory of Ladakh, held from August 21st to 23rd, 2023, marked a significant event in biodiversity preservation and research. Sponsored by the National Medicinal Plant Board under the Ministry of Ayush, Government of India, and organized by the Biodiversity Research Centre at the Kargil Campus of the University of Ladakh, the conference served as a platform to discuss the crucial subject of identifying and conserving medicinal plants in the unique ecosystem of Ladakh.

The inaugural session began with the warm welcome address delivered by Rector of the university, Madam Kaneez Fatima. She extended her greetings to the keynote speakers, participants, and attendees, emphasizing the pivotal role of biodiversity in sustaining ecosystems and human well-being. She took the opportunity to highlight the establishment of the Biodiversity Research Centre, showcasing the commitment of the University of Ladakh to advancing biodiversity conservation. Madam Kaneez Fatima emphasized the significance of preserving Ladakh's biodiversity. She expressed gratitude towards the organizers, sponsors, conveners, and university faculty members for their contributions.

A traditional Khatak Ceremony ensued, where Rector Kaneez Fatima extended a warm welcome to the Vice Chancellor of Ladakh by offering him a Khatak, symbolizing respect and hospitality. This gesture was extended to the rest of the keynote speakers as well, including Dr. Tariq Hussain, Former Chief Scientist at CSIR-NBRI Lucknow; Prof. Nirmala Chongtham from Punjab University; Dr. Anzar Khuroo, Associate Professor at the Centre of Biodiversity, University of Kashmir; Dr. Yashasvi Thakur from College of Horticulture and Forestry Nauni, Solan HP; Dr. Tsewang, Director of Slow Leopard Conservation Leh; and Dr. Sonam Dawa, Horticulture Development Officer, UT Ladakh.

Following the Khatak Ceremony, the Vice Chancellor and the keynote speakers unveiled the conference program booklet. Subsequently, the Vice Chancellor addressed the participants, underscoring the significance of biodiversity and its role in sustaining ecosystems and traditional knowledge systems. He particularly encouraged Ladakhi students to contribute to preserving and propagating medicinal plants indigenous to the region. The Vice-Chancellor also requested the keynote speakers to impart their valuable knowledge to the students, discussed the university's advancements, and announced the establishment of the Mountain Research Centre and Technology Enabling Centre. He applauded Madam Kaneez Fatima and the organizers for their efforts in hosting the conference.

Dr. Mohd Salim, the conference organizing secretary, provided a comprehensive overview of the key objectives of the conference. Subsequently, Dr. Tsewang Namgail, the Plenary Speaker, presented a talk on "A Peek into the Biological Diversity of Ladakh," shedding light on Ladakh's unique and diverse ecological features.

The first technical session commenced, with Dr. Anzar Ahmad delivering a lecture titled "Medicinal Plant Diversity of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh: What We Know and What We do Not." Dr. Ahmad's presentation delved into contemporary global challenges such as

biodiversity collapse and climate change. He discussed the distribution of plant diversity in Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh, emphasizing conservation priorities and underscoring the importance of endemism, threat status, and modes of harvesting.

Dr. Ahmad also chaired a session featuring four research presentations. Nirupama Bhacharyya from the University of Burdwan shared insights into “Antidiabetic Components Producing Plants and Their Principal Roles Country-wide.” Mohd Raza from Mata Vaishno Devi University presented a paper on “Medicinal Plants of Suru Valley in the Western Himalayas and Conservation Thereof.” Tajamul Hussain from Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences discussed “Linking City Biodiversity Index (CBI) with Ecosystem Services: A Case Study of Leh City, Ladakh.” Mohd Isshaq from the University of Ladakh presented a paper titled “Ethnobotanical and Pharmacological Review on Some Potential Medicinal Plants in Family Ranunculaceae of Kargil District, Ladakh.” The session concluded with insightful remarks from the chair.

The second technical session followed after lunch, chaired by Prof. Nirmala Chongtham, who delivered a lecture on “Ladakh: A Treasure House of Underutilized Plants for Food and Medicine.” Prof. Chongtham delved into the realm of underutilized plants unique to Ladakh, focusing on their potential in food and medicine. She highlighted the importance of promoting indigenous underutilized plants and discussed their commercialization. This session also featured four paper presentations. Jagatpati Tah from the University of Burdwan shared insights on “Antidiabetic Components Producing Plants and Their Principle Roles Country-wide.” Deekedoma Tamang discussed “Floristic and Socioeconomic Aspects of Medicinal Plants in the Temperate Broadleaf Forests of Laching Valley, North Sikkim.” Mansore Mehdi from the University of Ladakh presented “Some Threatened Medicinal Plants of Kargil District in Union Territory of Ladakh.” Kausar Parveen from the University of Ladakh concluded the session with a paper titled “Diversity of Ethnopharmacological Review of Some Notable Plants of Family Lamiaceae Found in Ladakh.” Prof. Chongtham provided insightful commentary on these presentations.

With the conclusion of the second technical session, the first day of the conference came to an end. The day’s proceedings underscored the commitment of researchers, academicians, and organizers to identifying and conserving medicinal plants in Ladakh, contributing to the broader goals of biodiversity preservation and sustainable development.



Dr Mohd Salim  
Organizing Secretary