

TRADITIONAL MEDICINE

With the aim to extend the scope of health care services by traditional medicine, two 50 bedded Traditional Medicine hospitals in Yangon and Mandalay have been upgraded to 100 bedded hospitals and 16 bedded Monywa Traditional Medicine hospital has been upgraded to 50 bedded in 2012.

Provision of Traditional Medicine Kits for Emergency Use

This is one of the special achievements of traditional medicine in Primary Health Care. There are two objectives: one is to make essential traditional medicines easily accessible for rural people especially in hard to reach areas and two is to minimize the cost of treatment for minor illnesses.

The kit contains seven different kinds of traditional medicines for minor illnesses, methylated spirit, traditional tincture, cotton wool and bandages for wound cleaning and dressing, and it also contains an instruction leaflet and one concise handbook. Pilot project started in August 2007 in Nay Pyi Taw. At the end of 2011, 7850 Traditional Medicine Kits were distributed to all States & Regions. According to the data and reports from the township level, provision of traditional medicine kits are effective and beneficial to the rural dwellers. It also supports and uplifts the health status of the people of Myanmar in context of primary health care.



Herbal Gardens and Traditional Medicine Museums

With the aims of perpetuation of medicinal plant species, sustainable development of herbal medicines and provision of quality raw materials for public and private pharmaceutical factories, the department developed eight herbal gardens around the country. The largest one which is designated as the National Herbal



Park is situated in Nay Pyi Taw covering 196.4 acres of land since its inception on 4th January 2008. Thousands of medicinal plants of nearly 500 different species are grown and nurtured, and commonly used and valuable herbs according to regional habitat can also be studied.

There are three TM museums run by the department: one in University of Traditional Medicine, Mandalay and two in National Herbal Park, Nay Pyi Taw. People from all walks of lives can study the roots and current situation of Myanmar Traditional Medicine at one sitting. The raw materials from animal, plant, mineral and aquatic sources used in TM drug formulations are also displayed colorfully. Hundreds of herbarium sheets are also prepared to disseminate the knowledge of medicinal plants.



Manufacturing of Traditional Medicine

The government is giving impetus to develop Traditional Medicine systematically up to international standard and to manufacture potent and efficacious Traditional Medicines based on scientific evidences and practices.

Traditional Medicines have been manufactured by both public and private sectors. The Department of Traditional Medicine is responsible for manufacturing in the public sector and owns two pharmaceutical factories. Medicines are produced according to the national formulary and Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) standards. These two factories manufacture twenty one kinds of Traditional Medicine powders which are provided free of charge to be dispensed in public Traditional Medicine facilities, and the factories also produce 12 kinds of Traditional Medicine drugs in tablet form for commercial purpose.



The private Traditional Medicine industry is also developing and undertaking mass production of potent and registered medicines according to the GMP standard. Some private industries are now exporting traditional medicines to neighbouring countries. Due to the encouragement and assistance of the government and the manufacturing of standardized traditional medicine under GMP, public trust and consumption of TM have greatly been enhanced. There is a progressive increase in demand for traditional medicine in both rural and urban areas.

Traditional Medicine Laws

Traditional Medicine Council Law – The Myanmar Indigenous Medicine Act was enacted in 1953. The State Traditional Medicine Council, a leading body responsible for all the matters relating to traditional medicine, was formed according to that law.

In the year 2000, the Myanmar Indigenous Medicine Act was replaced by the Traditional Medicine Council Law. One of the objectives of the law is "to supervise traditional medicine practitioners for abidance by the rule of conduct and discipline". At present there are 6752 registered traditional medicine practitioners under the Traditional Medicine Council Law.

Traditional Medicine Drug Law – The Government has promulgated the Traditional Medicine Drug Law in 1996, in order to supervise systematically the production and sale of traditional medicine in the country. One of the objectives of the law is "to enable the public to consume genuine quality, safe and efficacious traditional drugs". According to the law, all the traditional medicine drugs produced in the country have to be registered and the manufacturers must have license to produce their products. There are more than 10,000 registered TM drugs and the license for production is issued to more than 2000 manufacturers.

Manufacturing of traditional medicine drugs must follow the good manufacturing practice. The department also supervises and monitors the advertisement of traditional medicine drugs.

Myanmar Traditional Medicine Practitioners Association

Myanmar Traditional Medicine Practitioners Association has been established in 2002 after unification of various TM groups of different disciplines. The objectives of the association are to: provide consolidated efforts and contribution of TM practitioners in implementation of National Health Plan; provide community health care through TM approaches; do research and strive for the development of TM; conserve the endangered species of medicinal plants and animals while revitalizing the almost extinct TM textbooks and therapies and uplift of the dignity of TM profession and practitioners. The most important missions are to conduct continuing TM education programs, to provide quality services and to encourage the development of evidence based TM through systematic research.

Traditional Medicine Practitioners Conference

In order to promote the development of Myanmar Traditional Medicine, Myanmar Traditional Medicine Practitioners Conferences has been held annually since the year 2000. Traditional medicine practitioners from various parts of the country gathered and exchanged their knowledge at the conference, new policies and objectives are proposed, discussed and also reiterated the unity of TM healers for perpetuation and propagation of Myanmar Traditional Medicine.

