



[Ashwagandha stakeholders meet: Opportunities & Challenges in the wake of COVID-19 pandemics in India.](#)

Date: 20th May, 2020 (Wednesday)

Time: 11.00 am

Venue: ZOOM Video Conference.

Medicinal plants have been used for medicaments since ancient time. Plant based medicines, once lost in the oblivion, came to occupy an important place in the health management of mankind. They provide new windows of opportunities to congruently strengthen health, food, nutritional, economic and agro-ecological securities. India is a rich reservoir of valuable genetic resources of medicinal and aromatic plants as it is endowed with a wide spectrum of phytogeographic and agroclimatic zones and a rich culture of folklore heritage and traditional knowledge. The use of this knowledge in health care has resulted in the application of a large number of plant species in a variety of formulations of *Ayurveda*, *Unani* and *Sidha* systems of medicine.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the goal of 'Health for All' cannot be achieved without herbal medicines. While the demand for herbal medicines is growing in developing countries, there are indications that consumers in developed countries are becoming disillusioned with modern healthcare and are seeking alternatives in traditional medicines. The increasing demands for herbal medicines, has renewed interest of the multinational pharmaceutical industry in bio-prospecting. According to World Health Organization (WHO), the international market of herbal products is around \$6.2 billion, which is poised to grow to \$5 trillion by the year 2050.

Among the herbal plants, Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera* L. Dunal) is an important medicinal plant widely used in various traditional systems of medicines like Ayurveda, Sidha, Unani, Homeopathy and others. Ashwagandha is an erect, evergreen, perennial shrub belongs to the family Solanaceae. It is native to Indian sub-continent is also known as 'Indian Ginseng' because the roots are compared with Chinese ginseng (*Panax ginseng*) roots for their restorative properties. Ashwagandha is a multipurpose medicinal plant, synthesizing large array of bioactive secondary metabolites in roots and leaves. The medicinal properties of the root are attributed to Alkaloids (isopelletierine, anaferine), Steroidal lactones (withanolides, withaferins) and saponins containing an additional acyle group (Sitoindoside VII and VIII) which are present in roots and leaves. It has important **hepatoprotective, immunomodulatory, anti-cancer properties, anti-inflammatory, antitumor, anti-stress, anti-oxidant, mind-boosting and rejuvenating** properties. It also increases physiological endurance and protects against stress-related disorders such as arthritis, hypertension, diabetes and premature aging. Due to its wide application in pharmaceutical, cosmetic, agricultural and food industries, it has been brought under cultivation many centuries ago in



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India to meet its demand in national and international markets. The annual demand of ashwagandha is 7000 tonnes but its actual production is 1500 tonnes per annum. Root powder, extracts, tablets and blended tea are popular forms of consumption of Ashwagandha.

Research and development activities undertaken in Ashwagandha has resulted in releases of varieties, technologies and post-harvest handling operations by ICAR-DMAPR, AICRP-Programme, CSIR-CIMAP and State Agricultural Universities.

At present COVID-19 condition has invited the attention of Government to promote medicinal plants cultivation to boost up the immunity status of the people. Ashwagandha is an immune modulator which is having demand in the Indian system of medicine. At present the demand is in increasing level both in domestic and International trade. Hence, it is necessary to promote the cultivation of Ashwagandha so as to increase its availability for Indian system of medicine and to meet the International demand.

With this background the stakeholders meet is formulated

1. To take the stock of present situation in research and development, value addition and marketing,
2. To tap the opportunities available for Ashwagandha cultivation in India
3. The challenges are which are to be meet out
4. To find out the possible layout.



Program Schedule

1.	Participants Login into zoom	10:50 AM
2.	Welcome, Dr. S. Roy Director, ICAR-DMAPR	11:00 AM
3.	Status of Ashwagandha research in ICAR-DMAPR, Anand by Dr. P. Manivel	11:10 AM
4.	Remarks by: Dr. A.K. Singh DDG (Hort. Sci.), ICAR, New Delhi Dr. J.L. N Sastry CEO, NMPB, New Delhi Dr. T. Janakiram ADG (Hort. Sci.), ICAR, New Delhi Dr. P. K. Trivedi Director, CSIR-CIMAP, Lucknow	11:20 AM
6.	Discussion (All participants)	12:00 PM
7.	Vote of Thanks (D. P. Manivel)	12:30 PM