

## 'Nattu Vaidyar' Honoured for Work on Miracle Herb

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THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Chief Minister Oommen Chandy honoured T M Shahul Hamid, the first 'nattu vaidyar' in the state who is about to receive a patent for a herb with anti-diabetic properties. The Chief Minister released a monograph detailing the research done by Jawaharlal Nehru Tropical Botanic Garden Research Institute (JNTBGRI) on the herb. It was handed over to Shah Vaidyar.

While draping a shawl around Shah Vaidyar, the Chief Minister said that the state will consider offering him a fellowship, and asked JNTBGRI to start paper procedures for the same, at the function held at the CM's chamber.

According to the convention followed before, even if someone discovers a medicinal property of a herb by trial, if that person cannot prove it with scientific studies, he or she would not be eligible to become an inventor. They would just be informers. In an epoch making decision, JNTBGRI registered his name as an 'inventor' with scientists P G Latha, S Rajasekharan, S R Suja, Mathew Dan, Sabu Lal, M Navas and N M Krishnakumar, when the patent was filed.

The monograph was not released to the public, as formalities towards awarding the patent are still getting completed. " It takes four to six years, usually. However the studies have confirmed its anti-diabetic property," said S Rajasekharan, who retired as a scientist at JNTBGRI. The efficacy of a combination of the herb with two other herbs was also studied. In all the cases, the result was positive.

The project is now in its second phase. The phytochemical investigation of the herb at the molecular level is being conducted with the support of NIIST scientists. The project is part of a Rs 6 crore Department of Biotechnology programme. After identifying the molecules which aid in fighting diabetes, clinical tests will be conducted and the medicine will be made available to the masses.