The State could soon have a modern database of local medicinal plants and knowledge pertaining to traditional healthcare practices created using Geographical Information System (GIS).

The Health department has evinced keen interest in a project recommended by the Karnataka Knowledge Commission (KKC) that proposes to develop a local medicinal plant herbal pharmacopeia on an Information Communication Technology (ICT) platform.

In its recommendation - the latest to be submitted to the State government by the commission headed by renowned scientist K Kasturirangan - the panel has suggested the creation of an inventory of herbal medicines and traditional procedure-based therapies using satellite images and GIS.

“We are losing out on our traditional knowledge of medicine. By using the latest technology to create a database, we will be integrating traditional community health knowledge and practices with modern science,” KKC member secretary Mukund Rao said. He said the challenge is to ensure that traditional medicine is used properly.

“The knowledge needs to be documented and standardised. The best practices can then be shared among healthcare workers,” Rao said.

While there are hundreds of local herbal remedies, some commonly used include: Drinking fresh juice from Giloya shoot with honey, said to provide relief from acidity; Having decoction of dry ginger, pippali and amla twice a day, said to provide relief from cold and cough. The proposal is to create taluk-level database and documentation.

To start with, medicinal plant pharmacopeia for Heggadadevana Kote (HD Kote) taluk in Mysuru district, has been proposed. Later, it will be extended to other taluks. HD Kote is estimated to be home to 500 medicinal plants in the forest areas of Nagarahole National Park, Bandipur National Park, Karigala, Kalbetta, Kankanakote forest range, among others.

Minister for Health and Family Welfare U T Khader said he will convene a meeting soon to discuss the implementation of the project. “Household and traditional medicine can be safely used for preventive care. For instance, there are several herbal remedies used in different parts of the State for preventing diabetes,” the minister pointed out.
In a bid to provide a roadmap for the State government to implement the project, the KKC has come out with a 92-page document prepared in association with Institute of Trans-Disciplinary Health Science and Technology, Karnataka State Remote Sensing Applications Centre and Swami Vivekananda Youth Movement, HD Kote. Once completed the database would be hosted online for public access, Khader said.

**Local remedies**

Taluk-level inventory of medicinal plants and knowledge proposed
Knowledge commission has proposed that the project be launched taking HD Kote taluk as the pilot
Health Minister U T Khader to convene meeting soon to discuss implementation
Once complete, database to be hosted online for public access