

Indian scientists discover "Sanjeevani"

30 August 2014 | News | By BioSpectrum Bureau

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Researchers at the Defence Institute of High Altitude Research (DIHAR), Leh are exploring the therapeutic values of the local herb Rhodiola. This herb can apparently provide relief from disorders caused as a result of the difficult high altitude areas.

According to Mr RB Srivastava, director, DIHAR, Rhodiola is a wonder plant which has immunomodulatory (immune enhancing), adaptogenic (adapting to difficult climatic conditions), and radio-protecting abilities due to the presence of secondary metabolites and phytoactive compounds unique to the plant. It can also mitigate the effects of gamma radiation released due to biochemical warfare.

"A concerted effort involving conservation, propagation, and sustainable utilization of this unique medicinal herb will surely result in the rediscovery of Sanjeevani for the troops deployed in extreme climatic conditions, along the Himalayan frontiers," said the director to IANS.

The plant has also been found to have anti-depressant and appetizer properties. It has been used in traditional Chinese medicine to combat high-altitude sickness. In Mongolia, physicians prescribe it for diseases like tuberculosis and cancer. Other studies have found the herb to be useful for faster recovery after a heavy workout, for memory enhancement, and cardiac stress reduction.

"Our research reveals its potential for anti-aging, tissue regeneration, protecting neurons during lack of oxygen, and cognitive improvement," said Mr Sunil Hota, who is investigating medicinal properties of the plant at DIHAR.

The researchers are trying in-vitro propagation of the plant to increase its population.

