

Traditional Knowledge Digital Library

January 30, 2021

In News: AYUSH ministry and the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), New Delhi will collaborate in research and education in areas of traditional systems of medicine and its integration with modern science

About TKDL:

- The Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL) is an Indian digital knowledge repository of traditional knowledge, especially about medicinal plants and formulations used in Indian systems of medicine.
- Set up in 2001, as a collaboration between the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and the MINISTRY OF AYUSH. This is not the first collaboration of the two organisations.
- The objective of the library is to protect the ancient and traditional knowledge of the country from exploitation through biopiracy and unethical patents, by documenting it electronically and classifying it as per international patent classification systems.
- Apart from that, the non-patent database serves to foster modern research based on traditional knowledge, as it simplifies access to this vast knowledge of remedies or practices.

The TKDL contains documentation of publicly available traditional knowledge (TK) that:

- Relates to Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha and Yoga
- Is in digitized format
- Is available in five languages: English, German, French, Japanese and Spanish.

What are the benefits?

- TKDL has identified 1,000 cases of biopiracy of India's TK in the last 3 years. In 105 cases, patent claims were withdrawn or cancelled by the patent offices. This is done at no cost to India and it takes very less time. All that is required is an e-mail to the relevant patent office.
- There is a necessity to spend huge legal fees and time in fighting biopiracy. For example, the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) spent 7 years and Rs 7.62 crore in legal fees to fight the intellectual property rights battle for basmati rice.
- There has been as much as a 44% decline in patent claims filed on Indian systems of medicine.
- Now TKDL also includes videos of the most common yoga postures. This avoids granting wrong patents for Yoga exercise in the west which is an increasing trend.

TKDL in other countries

- Biopiracy is prevalent not just in the case of India's traditional knowledge. A large number of countries, rich in bioresources across the African and Latin American continents, are facing the same problem.
- The Traditional Knowledge of nearly 110 developing countries is vulnerable to theft and capture.
- With the help of India's experience these countries can initiate similar programmes to protect the traditional knowledge.

CSIR

Established: 26th September, 1942

Chairperson: Prime Minister of India

HQ : New Delhi

About:

- It is an autonomous body and the largest research and development (R&D) organisation in India – running 37 laboratories and 39 field stations or extension centres.
- Although it is mainly funded by the Ministry of Science and Technology, it operates as an autonomous body registered under the Registration of Societies Act, 1860.
- The research and development activities of CSIR includes aerospace engineering, Structural engineering, ocean sciences, Life sciences, metallurgy, chemicals, mining, food, petroleum, leather, and environment.