

THE INDIAN TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE DIGITAL LIBRARY TO SAFEGUARD MEDICAL PLANTS

The Indian Government, in order to safeguard the traditional knowledge about medical plants and to protect it from being misappropriated in the form of patents on non-original innovations, has set up, since 2001, the [Traditional Knowledge Digital Library \(TKDL\)](#). It is an important project aimed at collecting, systematizing and archiving the information on millenary remedies of the most important systems of traditional medicine: [Ayurveda](#), [Unani](#), [Siddha](#) and Yoga.



TKDL is implemented thanks to the collaboration of the Indian Ministry of Health & Family Welfare and the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR).

To set up the Library, experts, translators and scientists have identified formulations and uses of medical plants (more than 200.000 occurrences in 150 books) contained in precious manuscripts and texts in Sanskrit, Urdu, Arabic, Persian and Tamil.



The plants identified in this way are 291 to treat 186 diseases. They have been electronically archived and classified as per international patent classification systems. Entered into a database, the information is accompanied by therapeutic uses of each plant. The database is available in five languages: English, German, French, Japanese and Spanish. The Patent Offices authorized, by mean of a TKDL Access Agreement, may have access to the database for patent search and examinations purposes. Moreover, the database can foster research on traditional knowledge, as it simplifies access to this vast information.



TKDL has signed agreements with different international patent offices, such as the European Patent Office (EPO), the United Kingdom Trademark & Patent Office (UKPTO) and the United States Patent and Trademark Office. This system helps to protect traditional knowledge from bio-piracy of the pharmaceutical companies that try to patent, in order to have a financial benefit, active principles of medicinal plants that local population have known for centuries.

TKDL has become a point of reference for other countries on defensive protection of their traditional knowledge from misappropriation. Countries and organizations such as South Africa, African Regional Property Organization (ARIPO), Mongolia, Nigeria, Malaysia and Thailand have expressed their keen desire to replicate TKDL.



To know more

[Plants identified](#)

[TKDL in International Media](#)

[TKDL in National Media](#)

