

THE INDIAN TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE DIGITAL LIBRARY

To safeguard and study 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.

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, to date, 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.

The project 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.

The project, still ongoing, is implemented thanks to the collaboration of the Indian Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and the Department of Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy (Dept. of AYUSH).

To know more

[Plants identified](#)

[Press release about TKDL](#)