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India joins hands with UK, US to protect traditional knowledge

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India is expecting a rapid decline in the number of patents claim over its traditional medicinal formulations at the US and UK patents office following **TKDL (Traditional Knowledge Digital Library)** Access Agreements with these two countries.

A recent study carried out by **TKDL** expert team has revealed a sharp decline (44%) on filing of patent applications concerning Indian systems of medicine, in particular, on the generic group on medicinal plants at European Patent Office (EPO) with which an agreement was signed in February 2009.

Normally, on average, 80 such patent applications are being filed every year at EPO. About 25 get filed during October-December and 15-40 patents get granted yearly during this period. In contrast, during October-December 2009 only 14 applications got filed and no wrong patent was granted, according to Union Health Ministry officials.

TKDL acts as a bridge between these books and international patent examiners.

Today, India through **TKDL** is capable of protecting about two lakh medical formulations similar to those of neem and turmeric. On an average, it takes five to seven years for opposing a granted patent at international level which may cost Rs 1 to 3 crore (0.2-0.6 million US \$). The cost of protecting two lakh medicinal formulations in the absence of **TKDL** could be enormous, Union Health Ministry officials said.

TKDL has overcome language and formal barriers by scientifically converting and structuring the available information contents in 30 million A4 size pages of the ancient texts into five international languages, namely, English, Japanese, French, German and Spanish, with the help of information technology tools and a novel classification system - Traditional Knowledge Resource Classification (TKRC).

TKDL is a proprietary and original database **TKDL** technology integrates diverse disciplines and languages such as Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha, Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian, Tamil, English, Japanese, Spanish, French, German, modern science and modern medicine.