



The Positive Report: India Documents 900 Yoga Poses to Block Patents

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India has catalogued hundreds of **yoga poses** in an effort to block entrepreneurs and companies in other countries from getting **yoga**-related patents. **Yoga** is a centuries-old technique of exercising, breathing and meditating that has gained in popularity in recent years and grown into a huge industry.

The **yoga** postures or "**asanas**" have been documented by New Delhi's **Traditional Knowledge Digital Library** following a three-year effort by a team of **yoga** gurus, scholars and other experts.

After scrutinizing ancient Sanskrit texts they have made video recordings of nearly 900 **poses**, which are widely used by those teaching and practicing **yoga**. It aims to record at least 1,500 **poses**.

Yoga is regarded as a Hindu exercise that involves both philosophy and fitness. **India** says **yoga** has been practiced in the country for over 6000 years, and cannot be patented by others.

Their worry stems from hundreds of **yoga**-related patents and trademarks issued in recent years by Western countries where **yoga** is becoming increasingly popular.

V.K. Gupta, who heads the **Traditional Knowledge Digital Library**, says the ancient knowledge of **yoga** is "collective knowledge" and is available for use by everybody.

"It would be very inappropriate if some individuals or some companies try to appropriate this knowledge and prevent others from practice and use. We believe we will be able to do the authentic conversion of the ancient **yoga** texts and make it accessible to the international system so that all the piracy and other issues get prevented," **Gupta**.

The information compiled on **yoga** is being translated into English, French, Spanish, German and Japanese, and being sent to patent, copyright and trademark offices around the world.

Gupta says this will prevent **yoga**-related patents from being granted on the basis that they are original. Patents are given to those who invent or discover something new. **Yoga** has grown into an estimated \$250 billion industry.

Yoga is not the only ancient knowledge **India** is seeking to protect. The **Traditional Knowledge Digital Library** is also compiling a massive database of traditional medicines and ancient remedies that it wants to protect from being patented in other countries.

India says other countries are cooperating in the initiative. **New Delhi** has signed agreements with patent offices in the United States and Europe to help protect its traditional knowledge.

The government says in the past year more than one dozen patent applications with the European Patent Office, which concern Indian systems of medicine, have been withdrawn or set aside. This includes one for a skin cream based on melon extract and another for a medicine based on pistachios.

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