

Think twice before patenting yoga poses, TKDL is here

New Delhi, Dec 13: After years of helplessly watching westerners plagiarize its traditional knowledge - from yoga poses to Ayurvedic medicine - India has decided to put an end to generous free lunches people have been helping themselves to.

The government is in the process of translating millions of ancient transcripts on traditional knowledge areas to create an exhaustive database in English and other foreign languages, hoping that patent offices abroad would refer to them before granting applicants the right to use what is not theirs.

The database, christened **Traditional Knowledge Digital Library**, would have 30 million pages and a third of it has already been compiled, according to Commerce Ministry's Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion Secretary Ajay Dua.

The effort to create the database began after instances of patenting of yoga poses by westerners, including an Indian-born yoga guru in the US, came to light.

"Even as this exercise **(TKDL)** is going on, 150 yoga asanas (poses) have been patented abroad...134 of these asanas were granted patent by the US Patent and Trademark Office," Dua said.

While knowledge about yoga has been in public domain in India in various vernacular languages, the same was not available to patent examiners abroad, which is why outsiders have been granted patents on something that has been around in India for thousands of years.

Bureau Report