

India to patent *yoga asanas*

CHECKING PIRACY 900 postures to be added to traditional knowledge library

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NEW DELHI: The Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) has prepared patent formats of nearly 900 yoga *asanas* (postures), to prevent European and American companies involved in fitness-related activities from claiming them as their own.

These *asanas* will all be included in the digitised Traditional Knowledge Library (TKDL), set up by the council to collect and record traditional treatment therapy knowledge. Medicines and yoga *asanas* registered with it enjoy the status of being patented.

“Video recordings of the *asanas* are also being made and recorded to prevent them from being stolen,” said TKDL director Dr V.K. Gupta. The CSIR began the project in 2006.

These 900 *asanas* have been collected from Patanjali’s classic work on yoga, as well as other ancient classics like the *Bhagavad Gita*. Gupta said several countries had already laid claim to around 250 of these postures. Some foreign companies have even patented some of them.

Foreign companies have been selling some of the yoga postures as therapies to relieve stress or backaches.

“How can someone else patent these *asanas* which are a part of our traditional treatment therapy knowledge? They should not be allowed to use them for commercial purposes,” Dr Gupta said.

The CSIR’s next step will be to move against the yoga patents already registered abroad. The United States patent office alone has issued around 3000 patents on yoga postures and their variations.