



Traditional medicines documented:
In what is the world's first Traditional Knowledge Digital Library, India has documented over 2 lakh formulations of traditional medicine. P 10

To curb copies, India logs traditional formulations

Kounteya Sinha | TNN

New Delhi: In what is the world's first **Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL)**, India has completed documenting over two lakh medical formulations of Ayurveda, Siddha and Unani to save them from piracy.

After eight years of toil, over 200 scientists and researchers from the **Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)** and Union health ministry's department of **Ayush** have scientifically converted information of traditional Indian medicine from Hindi, Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian, Urdu and Tamil to five international languages—English, Japanese, French, German and Spanish.

The **TKDL**, 30 million pages of information, has been created to prevent those living abroad from claiming patent for existing formulations. India, till now, has lost over 15,000 patents of medicinal plants to the West.

According to **Dr V P Gupta** from **CSIR** who created **TKDL**, India would lose 2,000 new patents every year without such a digital library.

In the past, patents have been granted by the European Patent Office (EPO) on the use of over 285 Indian medicinal plants such as papaya, Indian long pepper, kali tulsi, pudina, ginger, aloe, Isabgol, aonla, jira, soybean, tomato, almond, walnut and methi.

This is why India has now also signed a landmark agreement with the EPO. Under the three-year agreement, which came into effect on February 3, **TKDL's** database would be available to the patent examiners at EPO "for establishing prior art", in case of patent applications based on Indian systems of medicine (ISM).

However, **TKDL's** information will be restricted only for patent search and examination purposes. EPO will not be able to disclose the information to a third party.

PROTECTING SECRETS



● India has lost over **15,000** patents of medicinal plants to the West

● On an average, it takes **5 to 7** years to oppose a granted patent and costs between **Rs 1 to 3** crores

● Over **200,000** medical formulations have now been documented into India's **Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL)**

● Creating **TKDL** took over **8** years and cost **Rs 7** crore

● The library will prevent those living abroad from claiming patent for existing formulations

● Without the library, India would have lost **2000** patents every year concerning

Indian Systems of Medicine (ISM)

● At any given time, **50** patent applications based on ISMs are awaiting grant of patent

● The decision to create **TKDL** was taken after wrong patents were granted on wound-healing properties of **turmeric** (1995) at the United States and on anti-fungal properties of **Neem** granted at European Patent Office (EPO)

● The patents were revoked in 1997 and 2005 respectively



● In the past, patents have been granted at EPO on the use of over **285** Indian medicinal plants. These include **Papaya, Indian long pepper, Kali Tulsi, Pudina, ginger, aloe, Isabgol, Amla, Jira, Soybean, Tomato, Almond, Walnut** and **Methi**

While India will help EPO with search assistance, EPO will inform India about what information was used as citation from the **TKDL** once in every three months.