

TKDL-Livelihood of Large Population in World

Wednesday, March 23, 2011 TKDL-Livelihood of Large Population in World TKDL crossed many hurdles and impediments and have been successfully negotiated and benchmarks created and set in place. TKDL team with its organized and objective activity has brought TKDL to this stage of international acceptability. More than 150 experts in the area of traditional medicine, Information Technology, IPRs and Scientists spent almost ten years for this task. Speaking at the inaugural session of the International Conference on Utilization of the Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL) as a model for the protection of Traditional Knowledge here today, Union Minister of Science and Technology, Earth Sciences and Vice President, Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, said, "Today, India is well equipped to protect 2lakh,26 thousand formulations within a time range of 'days and weeks' and without any cost, whereas in the cases of 'Neem' and 'Turmeric' the country had to incur huge cost and it took more than 10 years to get the 'Neem' patent revoked at EPO. TKDL has been embraced by the World Intellectual Property Organization and by the EPO and US-PTO as well as other patent offices worldwide who have found in it a powerful weapon to fight biopiracy." The Minister explained that Traditional Knowledge is also the basis of the livelihood of a very large population in the world, in particular, in developing countries. India developed this much needed tool for protection of Traditional Knowledge. This process began in the year 2000, when wrong patents granted on the wound healing properties of turmeric by US Patent Office and another on the antifungal property of Neem by the European Patent Office, came to notice and were later fought and got revoked.

He added, "The issue of Traditional knowledge protection is quite a sensitive one, since traditional knowledge is the information that people in a given community, have developed over generations, on the basis of their experience and which is adapted to local culture and environment. Many countries are struggling to protect their traditional knowledge, against wrongful exploitation, primarily in the pharmaceutical sector. This knowledge is used to sustain the community and its culture, as well as biological resources necessary for the continued survival of the community. As per World Health Organization reports, it is estimated that more than 70% of the population is dependent on traditional medicines for their primary health care needs." For the last several years efforts are being made by different International organizations like World Trade Organization, World Intellectual Property Organization and Convention on Biological Diversity, to evolve an implementable solution for protection of Traditional Knowledge, though it is very difficult to bring about a consensus due to diversity of interests at multilateral fora. Shri Bansal informed, "To ensure that that no wrong patent is granted on India's traditional knowledge, the access of TKDL database – which breaks the language barriers and converts India's traditional knowledge of Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha & Yoga, originally written in Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian and Tamil, into five international languages makes information understandable to the International Patent Examiners. Access to TKDL has been given to several international Patent Offices under a non-disclosure agreement." Expressing deep concern about earthquake and tsunami that hit Japan on 12.3.2011, Shri Bansal said, "We were to sign the TKDL Access Agreement with Japan Patent Office on March 25, 2011, in New Delhi. People of Japan are passing through a difficult and trying times. We express solidarity with the brave and resilient people of Japan." TKDL has made waves around the world, particularly in traditional knowledge rich countries by demonstrating the advantages of proactive action and the power of strong deterrence. The idea is not to restrict the use of traditional knowledge, but to ensure that wrong patents are not granted due to lack of access to the prior art for Patent examiners. India developed this much needed tool for protection of Traditional Knowledge. This process began in the year 2000, when wrong patents granted on the wound healing properties of turmeric by US Patent Office and another on the antifungal property of Neem by the European Patent Office, came to notice and were later fought and got revoked. Posted by Nksagar at 7:15 PM 0 comments

