

Report on the International Conference on “Communication and Dissemination of Traditional Knowledge (CDTK-2023)”

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CSIR-National Institute of Science Communication and Policy Research (NIScPR) organised a two day International Conference on Communication and Dissemination of Traditional Knowledge (CDTK-2023) at NASC complex during 14th and 15th February, 2023. The goal of this International Conference was to promote traditional knowledge and strengthen the collaborations between stakeholders dedicated towards proper documentation, validation, communication and dissemination of traditional knowledge. More than 300 participants attended the event as distinguished chairpersons, invited speakers, keynote speakers, participants, panelists, exhibitors, and students. The registration/participation for the conference was from 22 states, 03 UTs and 07 foreign countries.



The conference was inaugurated by Dr N Kalaiselvi, DG, CSIR & Secretary, DSIR, Shri Vaidya Rajesh Kotecha, Secretary, Ministry of Ayush, Govt. of India, and Prof Ranjana Aggarwal, Director, CSIR-NIScPR. Dr N Kalaiselvi elaborated the potential of CSIR-NIScPR in strengthening scientific and traditional knowledge (TK) communication across the country. Shri Vaidya Rajesh Kotecha mentioned that TKs have global footprints which need to be communicated effectively. The keynote speaker of the inaugural session, Prof Subhash Kak, Oklahoma State University, USA who joined online emphasized the use of Indian languages to communicate science and suggested that India should work towards mainstreaming traditional medicine systems in the country.

The first technical session (Day 1) on the theme ‘Global Trends in Traditional Knowledge Research’ was chaired by Prof Bhagwati Prakash Sharma, Former VC, Gautam Buddha University, Noida. Eminent speakers were Prof Vasant Shinde, Former VC, Deccan College, Pune, Dr Kshitij Patukale, Founder- Bhisma School of Indic Studies, Pune, Dr Indira Priyadarsini, University of Mumbai, and Dr Wend Wendland, Director, TK Division, WIPO, Geneva (online). All the talks arrived at the conclusion that India is having a rich traditional

knowledge repository and it is high time to exhibit, validate and propagate that knowledge at global platform and get it recognised across the world and to strengthen faith on it.

The second technical session was on the theme ‘Scientific Validation of Traditional Knowledge’ chaired by Dr Viswajanani Sattigeri, Head, CSIR-TKDL Unit, New Delhi. The invited speakers were Dr Madhu Dikshit, Former Director, CSIR-CDRI, Lucknow (Online), Prof Rammanohar P, Research Director, Amrita School of Ayurveda, Kerala, Prof Sharada Srinivasan, Professor, National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bengaluru and Prof Sunita T Pandey, Professor, GBPUAT, Pantnagar. The session came out to be thought provoking as it summarised how laboratory studies, clinical trials and extended research work can actually validate the ancient traditional knowledge systems scientifically.

The final session of day 1 was a panel discussion on ‘Challenges in Traditional Knowledge Communication- Misinformation, Disinformation and Fake News’ which was chaired by Prof. B N Jagatap, Senior Professor at IIT Bombay. Other panelists were Dr Geetha Vani Rayasam, Head, CSIR-HRDG, New Delhi, Prof K G Suresh, VC, MCNUJC, Bhopal, Shri R Gopu, Varahamihira Science Forum, Chennai, Dr Kinkini Dasgupta, Vigyan Prasara, New Delhi and Dr G Mahesh, Chief Scientist, CSIR-NIScPR. The session discussed the reason behind the initiation of wrong information and stated that the function of scientific communication is to answer common people's curiosity, develop scientific temper, disapprove incompatible concepts, condemn false information and incline the scientists of the country towards India's traditional knowledge so that corrections on any misunderstandings/ misinformation could be implemented.

Day 2 started with a session on the theme ‘Scientifically Validated Traditional Approach for Health and Wellness’ chaired by Dr Ruchir Gupta, IIT-BHU, Varanasi. Eminent speakers included Dr Yelloji-Rao K Mirajkar, Overseas Coordinator, GISTF, USA, Dr Ishwar V Basavaraddi, Director, MDNIY, New Delhi and Dr Sridevi Annapurna Singh, Director, CSIR-CFTRI, Mysuru. Dr Chidi Oguamanam, University of Ottawa, Canada (Online), the Keynote Speaker of Session 5 also spoke in this session. Dr Chidi particularly commended the efforts of SVASTIK to communicate traditional knowledge in various Indian regional languages. Experts mentioned that the traditional food system along with proper sleep and yoga practices act as a medicine for the body. The modern concept of balanced diet existed long back in our own traditional knowledge system.



This session was followed by a special session where the Hon'ble Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science & Technology, Dr Jitendra Singh released the Conference abstract book & Souvenir, Indian Journal of Traditional Knowledge *Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav* issue, and a popular science book 'SVASTIK:

Indian Traditional Knowledge Through the Lens of Science’ on stories disseminated under CSIR-NIScPR’s national initiative SVASTIK. During his address, the Hon’ble Minister mentioned about the vision of the Hon’ble Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi who encourages blend of futuristic technology with traditional knowledge, for a greater good. He emphasised on the richness of traditional knowledge and discussed associated challenges. He concluded that solutions of many future issues are lying in the age-old scientific practices in the form of traditional knowledge which need to be researched and the outcomes should be communicated effectively.

Session 5 was on the theme ‘Scholarly and Popular Communication in Traditional Knowledge’ which was chaired by Dr Uma Kumar, Head, Department of Rheumatology, AIIMS, New Delhi. Invited speakers were Prof Madhumita Barooah, Assam Agricultural University, Jorhat and Sri R Gopu, Co-Founder, Varahamihira Science Forum, Chennai. Dr Rashmi Kulkarni, Member, GIST, Qatar (Online), an invited speaker of Session 4 also spoke in this session. The speakers discussed the importance of study, communication and branding of Indian traditional food practices. It was also suggested to be a vigilant observer to understand the reasoning behind our own TKs.

The sixth session was a panel discussion on the topic ‘Traditional Knowledge Research & Communication- The Road Ahead’ with Prof Saroj K Barik from NEHU, Shillong as the chairperson. The other eminent panelists were Mr Madhvendra Narayan, Assoc Editor, IJHS, INSA, New Delhi, Dr Rama Jayasundar, Professor & Head, NMR Division, AIIMS, New Delhi, Dr Sharad Srivastava, Sr Principal Scientist, CSIR-NBRI, Lucknow, Prof BN Jagatap and Dr V Sattigeri. Experts discussed the potential of TKs to address major environmental issues. The economisation of Indian traditional knowledge and the need of alternative ways and methods for documentation were also the highlights of the discussion.

CDTK-2023 had an interesting panel discussion sponsored by the Quality Council of India titled “Traditional Ecological Knowledge- A tool for scientific resource management and sustainable development” on the 2nd day of the conference.

All four technical sessions had oral presentations by the delegates. A separate parallel session on day 2 for oral presentations was also conducted. The poster presentation took place alongside lunch and tea sessions on both the days.

A special Exhibition Pavilion was also a major highlight of the Conference in which different CSIR labs namely, CSIR-CDRI, CSIR-CLRI, CSIR-IGIB, CSIR-IIP and CSIR-NIScPR participated. In addition, Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS), Quality Council of India (QCI), and the international publishers ACS Publications and Clarivate also participated in this pavilion.

The Valedictory session was conducted by Chairperson CDTK Dr G Mahesh, Organising Secretary Dr Charu Lata and Co-Organising Secretary Dr Paramananda Barman. The organisers acknowledged everyone’s contribution towards the successful completion of this two day International Conference as well as requested all the delegates and distinguished guests to contribute intellectually to the growth of SVASTIK.

The major recommendations from CDTK 2023 are as follows:

- To popularise traditional knowledge and attract more scientists to contribute towards research and validation of traditional knowledge.
- To create interface between traditional knowledge and science, technology, and innovation through communication.
- To document traditional knowledge prior to validation before the loss of the rich and valuable indigenous practices.
- To communicate technology and innovations of India especially based on traditional knowledge effectively to the next generation especially to the school children.
- To communicate traditional knowledge in Indian languages.
- To create more inventories like TKDL through CSIR and Ayush in order to codify the Indian Knowledge systems under a broader spectrum.

- To mainstream Indian traditional medicine systems along with the modern health systems in the country by providing certifications for traditional knowledge practitioners.
- To emphasise on documentation of tribal medicinal practices in order to protect them from erosion.
- To optimise and integrate traditional Indian knowledge for stakeholders in terms of profitable outcomes.
- To mobilise the traditional knowledge for improving economy through start-ups & new projects.
- To validate the claims as well as the process of traditional knowledge product(s).
- To look for alternative ways and methods for documenting the traditional knowledge.
- To promote rich diversity of traditional Indian diet including benefits of underestimated food such as millets.
- To promote critical thinking among the public through social media platforms or scientific communication to curb the rapid spread of fake news, misinformation, and disinformation.

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