

# Horizon

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GOVERNMENT OF MAHARASHTRA



## DEAN'S MESSAGE

*Traditional Knowledge (TK) in this era of globalisation has the potential of being translated into commercial benefits by providing leads for development of useful products and processes. The valuable leads provided by TK save time, money and investment of modern biotech and other industries into any research and product development. Hence, a share of benefits must accrue to creators and holders of TK. Issues relating to protecting, recognizing and rewarding of TK associated with biological resources and folklore are very complex. The modalities for protecting TK are still emerging and evolving. The nature of entitlement and share in benefits is also a gray area. Even at the international level, clarity has as yet not emerged and countries are grappling to understand the issue. In the field of Traditional Knowledge related to Indian systems of medicine we have no shortcuts than to protect our knowledge, innovations and practices. These shall be achieved by documentation of the traditional knowledge, registration that may be required to register the*

*domain of Ayurved. The development of contracts with biotech or other companies for commercialization, transfer of technology, benefit sharing too have to evolve fast. The intellectual property rights under existing IPR systems have to be ensured.*

*Documentation of TK has also to be backed by some mechanism of protecting the knowledge. Documentation of TK may only serve a limited defensive purpose, namely, that of preventing the patenting of this knowledge in the national jurisdiction. This necessitates the need for extending some legal protection to TK internationally. Nationally a system of registration of innovations has also to be evolved. Value addition to this knowledge for converting it into economically profitable investments or enterprises has also to be ensured. Many of the innovators may not have the capacity for value addition. Thus, there is a need for providing institutional support in scouting, spanning, sustaining and scaling up of grassroots innovations and to enhance technical competence and self reliance of these innovators.*

*In the recent past, there have been several cases of bio-piracy of TK from India. For preventing such instances in future, Govt. of India is preparing a database named as TK Digital Library (TKDL) in most commonly understood languages in the west. Such digital database would enable Patent Officers all over the world to search and examine any prevalent use/prior art, and thereby prevent grant of such patents and bio-piracy. But this is just the beginning of a great effort we need to protect our TK.*

*We have to wake up to the threats of Bio Piracy. If we don't wake up now, our treasure of ancient wisdom might have to be accessed with the permission of those who would have stolen this ancient knowledge from us.*

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