

Report: National capacity building workshop on “Traditional medicine: Documentation, validation and communication”

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A National Capacity Building Workshop on “Traditional Medicine: Documentation, Validation and Communication” was organised by CSIR-National Institute of Science Communication and Policy Research (NIScPR) in association with the ICMR-National Institute of Traditional Medicine (NITM) under the national initiative #SVASTIK (Scientifically Validated Societal Traditional Knowledge) on 06th March 2026 at NITM, Belagavi. More than 60 participants from 10 different institutions in and around Belagavi registered and actively participated in the workshop.

Dr Padma Gurmet, Padma Shri and Director, National Institute of Sowa-Rigpa (NISR) was the Chief Guest of the Inaugural session. The inaugural session was also graced by the Keynote Speaker Professor Ranjana Aggarwal, Outstanding Scientist, CSIR and Former Director, CSIR-NIScPR, Dr Subarna Roy, Director, ICMR-National Institute on Traditional Medicine, and Dr Geetha Vani Rayasam, Director, CSIR-NIScPR who joined online.



Dr Harsha Hegde, Scientist F, ICMR-NITM gave the welcome address followed by felicitation of the dignitaries, and ceremonial lighting of the lamp. Dr Subarna Roy, Director, ICMR-NITM in his introductory remarks emphasised on the importance of communicating research and development happening in traditional medicine to general public through various communication platforms, and advocated the importance of science communication among traditional medicine researchers irrespective of the stage of their career.

Dr. Padma Gurmet, Director, NISR, Leh delivered an insightful talk on Sowa Rigpa, an Indian Medicinal System, and discussed in detail the inception journey of the institute. In his talk, Dr Gurmet emphasised on the importance of traditional systems of medicine especially Sowa-Rigpa, and its interconnectedness with Ayurveda. He also stressed on the need for documentation, validation and communication of TMs for better visibility and integration in contemporary medical system.

Prof Ranjana Aggarwal, Outstanding Scientist, CSIR gave an overview of Bharatiya Gyan Parampara in her Keynote talk. Dwelling on the concept of *Vedas* and *Panchkosha*, and citing examples from different traditional knowledge/practices of India, she underscored the importance of validating such knowledge, its convergence with modern science, and effective communication to society.

Later in the first technical session of the workshop on “India’s traditional medicine heritage: from protection to perpetuation” Prof Pulok Mukherjee, Jadavpur university gave the plenary talk on the topic “Translation of Traditional Medicine, Systems Ethnopharmacology and Sustainable Bioresources”. He urged the participants to value local health traditions, and emphasised on development of ethnopharmacology driven products keeping in mind regulatory guidelines and ethical considerations, and utilization of sustainable bioresources.

Vaidya Pawankumar Ramesh Godatwar, World Health Organization Centre, New Delhi delivered an engaging plenary talk on the perspectives of WHO on holistic health worldwide. He talked about the research priority settings in traditional medicine initiated by WHO for affordable and sustainable health for majority population globally.

In the second technical session, Dr. Charu Lata, Principal Scientist, CSIR-NIScPR and Coordinator, SVASTIK initiative, delivered an insightful talk on India’s traditional systems of medicine. She outlined the activities carried out under the national initiative SVASTIK from identifying and validating traditional practices to documenting and communicating them to the public through social media platforms. She added that educators and researchers should be equipped to effectively communicate science by linking conventional knowledge with verified scientific data.

It was followed by an interactive hands-on training on traditional knowledge communication by Dr. Paramananda Barman, Senior Scientist, CSIR-NIScPR. He explained the fundamentals of science communication and discussed its various forms that help translate scientific concepts for wider audiences. During the session, participants received hands-on training in writing popular article, designing communication materials, and creating visually appealing infographics, and short videos.

During the workshop, SVASTIK was also showcased through a vibrant exhibition displayed by the CSIR-NIScPR team. Additionally, pre- and post- workshop surveys were also conducted to analyse the impact of the workshop among the participants. The workshop was highly applauded by the participants.

