

## Report of the 12<sup>th</sup> International Congress of the Society for Ethnopharmacology, India (SFEC 2025)

The 12<sup>th</sup> International Congress of the Society for Ethnopharmacology (SFEC 2025) was jointly organized by KLE College of Pharmacy, Belagavi, KLE Academy of Higher Education & Research, the Society for Ethnopharmacology Kolkata (India), in association with the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) - National Institute of Traditional Medicine, Belagavi, India. This prestigious event took place from March 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup>, 2025, at the KLE Centenary Convention Centre in Belagavi, Karnataka, India on the theme of “Ethnopharmacology: Integrating Traditional Health Practices and Contemporary Medical Science”. The conference attracted international experts, academicians, researchers, and practitioners to discuss the intersection of ethnopharmacology, drug technology, and phytopharmaceuticals.



Inauguration and lighting of the inaugural lamp during SFEC 2025 at Belagavi, India



Inauguration of Conference proceedings of SFEC 2025 at Belgavi, India

This three-day conference featured a series of keynote and plenary sessions addressing cutting-edge topics. Highlights included Prof. Mukherjee's keynote on integrating traditional practices with modern science, and Prof. Rudolf Bauer's insights on metabolomics-based quality control. Sessions explored a range of themes, such as regenerative medicine, data integrity, crisis in reproducibility, and innovative research on neurodegeneration and tribal healing traditions. Thought-provoking panel discussions tackled themes like ethno-entrepreneurship for *Atmanirbhar Bharat* and the integration of ethnopharmacology with mainstream medicine, bringing together academia, industry, and policy stakeholders. An engaging SFE-Young Ethnopharmacologist Competition celebrated emerging researchers, while poster presentations provided a platform for scientific dialogue. Cultural performances and a conference dinner added a vibrant social dimension to the scholarly exchange. With participation from eminent scientists, industry leaders, and young researchers across the globe, SFEC-IDTP 2025 served as a vital platform for fostering collaboration and innovation in the realm of traditional and modern healthcare convergence.

The formal inauguration ceremony of the 12<sup>th</sup> International Congress of the Society for Ethnopharmacology, India (SFEC 2025) was held with great dignity and grandeur on March 6, 2025, from 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM at the Dr. B. S. Jirge Auditorium (Hall 1) of the KLE Convention Centre, Belagavi. The event commenced in the esteemed presence of Dr. Prabhakar B. Kore, Hon'ble Chancellor and Chairman of KAHER & KLE Society, who welcomed delegates and dignitaries with inspiring words on India's leadership in traditional healthcare systems. The dais was graced by eminent personalities including Dr. Nitin M. Gangane, Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor of KAHER; Dr. Subarna Roy, Director of ICMR-NITM; Dr. Sanjay Mishra, Senior Advisor at the Department of Biotechnology, Government of India; and Shri Sekhar Dutt, Former Governor of Chhattisgarh and Advisor to the Society for Ethnopharmacology. A highlight of the ceremony was the presence of Dr. Shekhar C. Mande, Distinguished Professor at the Bioinformatics Centre, SPPU Pune, and Former Director General of CSIR, who delivered remarks on the intersection of scientific innovation and traditional medicine. The founding spirit of the society was upheld by Prof. Pulok K. Mukherjee, Founder of SFE India and Chairman of Scientific Services for SFEC 2025, who welcomed delegates and outlined the congress objectives. Distinguished international guests, including Prof. Namrita Lall, President of the International Society for Ethnopharmacology (Switzerland), and Prof. Rudolf Bauer, Executive Member of ISE Switzerland and Professor Emeritus at the University of Graz, Austria, addressed the audience, highlighting the global relevance of ethnopharmacology. Other key dignitaries included Dr. C. K. Katiyar and Shri Indraneel Das, Vice Presidents of SFE India, whose remarks emphasized collaborative research and cultural preservation. The organizing spirit of the congress was represented by Dr. Sunil S. Jalalpure, Principal of KLE College of Pharmacy and Organizing Chairperson of SFEC 2025, alongside Dr. M. S. Ganachari, Registrar of KAHER. The inauguration concluded with a ceremonial lighting of the lamp and the release of the congress souvenir, symbolizing the formal launch of a historic event dedicated to integrating traditional medicine with cutting-edge scientific innovation.

## Panel Discussions

A major intellectual highlight of SFEC-IDTP 2025 was the **panel discussion series**, which created a platform for critical dialogue across sectors. One of the standout panels focused on “*Ethno-entrepreneurship for Atmanirbhar Bharat*,” emphasizing the integration of traditional knowledge with entrepreneurship to achieve self-reliance in healthcare. Experts from regulatory bodies, R&D institutions, and herbal industries engaged in stimulating conversations about policy frameworks, business models, and funding opportunities to empower rural and tribal communities through herbal entrepreneurship.

Another thought-provoking session, “*Innovative Product/Process/Technologies from Botanicals: Industrial Perspectives*,” brought together industry stalwarts like Dr. Lal Hingorani, Dr. Nikhil Agrawal, and Dr. Aboli Girme. Under the stewardship of Dr. U.V. Babu and Dr. Arvind Saklani, this panel addressed the practical aspects of product development from botanicals, ranging from regulatory hurdles and quality assurance to global marketing and intellectual property rights. These discussions were vital in aligning academic research with industrial and commercial needs.

## Keynote Lectures

The **keynote sessions** set the academic tone of the congress with impactful talks from internationally renowned experts. Prof. Pulok K. Mukherjee delivered the inaugural keynote, advocating for the integration of traditional medicine systems with evidence-based scientific methodologies. His address underscored the need for quality, safety, and efficacy assessments in herbal formulations.

Prof. Rudolf Bauer of Austria shared his expertise on “*Metabolomics-Based Quality Control in Herbal Medicines*,” stressing the role of modern analytical tools in standardizing phytopharmaceuticals. On Day 3, keynote lectures by Prof. Namrita Lall and Dr. Roy Upton delved into “*Sustainable Natural Product Innovations*” and “*The Global Relevance of Ayurveda*,” respectively, offering visionary insights into how traditional medical systems can thrive in a globalized scientific ecosystem.

## Plenary Sessions

A series of **plenary sessions** over all three days delivered a diverse and deep exploration of scientific innovation in ethnopharmacology. Topics ranged from regenerative and integrative medicine to novel bioactive compound discovery, crisis in reproducibility, antimicrobial resistance, and veterinary applications of herbal therapies.

- **Plenary V** featured speakers like Dr. Marina Spinu and Dr. Sanjay Jachak, who explored natural remedies for antimicrobial resistance.
- **Plenary VI**, under the theme “*Tradition to Trends in Integrative Medicine*,” saw participation from Dr. Prakash Neswi and Major Dr. Jeetendra Singh, focusing on regulatory frameworks and therapeutic harmonization between modern and traditional practices.

- **Plenary VII to IX** showcased regional and international research on African traditional medicine, Cannabis sativa genotypes, polyherbal formulations, and phytotherapy in animals, with contributions from Dr. Narendra Kumar, Dr. Shashikant Torgal, and others.

Each plenary session was meticulously curated and expertly moderated, facilitating a seamless transfer of knowledge across generations and geographies.



Felicitation of the keynote & Plenary speakers during the SFEC 2025 at Belagavi, India



Felicitation of the keynote & Plenary speakers during the SFEC 2025 at Belagavi, India

### SFE Award Ceremony 2025

The SFE Award Ceremony 2025, held on the first day of the 12th International Congress of the Society for Ethnopharmacology (SFEC-IDTP 2025) at the KLE Convention Centre, Belagavi, served as a grand tribute to excellence in the fields of medicinal plant research and ethnopharmacology. In recognition of remarkable contributions to science, innovation, and the promotion of traditional healthcare knowledge, five major awards were conferred on eminent personalities by the Society for Ethnopharmacology, India. Dr. Sekhar C. Mande, Former Director General of CSIR and Distinguished Professor at the Bioinformatics Centre, was presented with the prestigious SFE Lifetime Achievement Award 2025, honoring his exceptional leadership and lifelong dedication to the advancement of scientific research. Additionally, the Sibeswar Saha Memorial Award 2025, instituted in memory of Sri Sibeswar Saha, was conferred in acknowledgment of distinguished service to ethnopharmacological advancement. Dr. Arvind Saklani, Vice President of Sami-Sabinsa Group, was honored with the SFE Outstanding National

Ethnopharmacologist Award 2025, and further recognized with the Harihar Mukherjee Memorial Award, instituted with the support of Prof. Pulok K. Mukherjee in remembrance of his late father Sri Harihar Mukherjee, for his efforts in bridging traditional wisdom with modern industry practices. On the international front, Prof. Ikhlas Khan, Director of the National Center for Natural Products Research, University of Mississippi, USA, was awarded the SFE Outstanding International Ethnopharmacologist Award 2024, alongside the Pranab Banerji Memorial Award 2025, both recognizing his global leadership in botanical medicine research. The SFE ZANDU Award 2025, supported by Emami Ltd., Kolkata, for outstanding contributions to plant-based drug research, was awarded to Prof. Aleksander Shikov of Saint Petersburg State Chemical Pharmaceutical University, Russia. In recognition of academic leadership and institutional contributions, Prof. Sunil S. Jalalpure, Principal and Professor in the Department of Pharmacognosy at KLE College of Pharmacy, received the SFE Special Recognition Award 2025.



Some Glimpses of the SFE Award Ceremony during the 12<sup>th</sup> International Congress of SFE (SFEC 2025)

## Traditional Healers' Meet

One of the most culturally and scientifically enriching segments of the congress was the **Traditional Healers' Meet**, held under the banner "*Traditional Healthcare Practices – Exploring Ancestral Medicine.*" This session honored the wisdom of India's traditional medical practitioners, creating a shared platform for dialogue between indigenous knowledge holders and modern scientists.

Chaired by Dr. Prakash R. Itankar and Dr. Harsha V. Hegde, with discussions led by Prof. Pulok K. Mukherjee and Dr. Pramod H. J., the session featured valuable insights from Vaidya Sridhar Desai, Shri. Vishwanath Hedge, and others. These discussions highlighted the preservation and formal recognition of oral traditions and community-based healing, reinforcing their relevance in the modern healthcare ecosystem.



Traditional Healers' Meet during the  
12<sup>th</sup> International Congress of SFE, (SFEC 2025)

## Oral Presentation Sessions

The oral presentations provided an inclusive stage for young and experienced researchers to present their work on novel bioactives, traditional formulations, pharmacological validation, and drug delivery systems derived from natural sources. Two different oral sessions were organized: one session on “Young Ethnopharmacologist Competition” – Prof. P K Debnath Memorial Award and “Oral presentation competition” – Prof. Peter J Houghton Award. The sessions were guided by a panel of esteemed international reviewers including Prof. Rudolf Bauer, Dr. Patricia Rijo, Dr. Amit Karand Dr. M.S. Palled. The interactive nature of these sessions enabled deep academic discourse and critical feedback, fostering the next generation of scholars in ethnopharmacology.



Oral presentation session during the 12<sup>th</sup> International Congress of SFE, (SFEC 2025)

## Poster Presentations

Running parallel to the oral sessions were poster presentations, which took place in three sessions over two days in the KLECCF foyer. More than 150 posters were exhibited, categorized thematically across phytochemistry, pharmacology, pharmacognosy, and clinical applications. These sessions facilitated vibrant interactions between researchers, evaluators, and industry experts, allowing participants to refine their scientific narratives and form collaborations. The Best poster presentation Award – Prof. SS Handa Memorial Award has been conducted



Poster presentation session during the SFE 12<sup>th</sup> International Congress of SFE, (SFEC 2025)

### **Ethnoenterpreneurship, Grower’s, Buyer’s & Seller’s Meet**

Held in tandem with the special session Ethnoenterpreneurship development, the Grower’s, Buyer’s & Seller’s Meet centered on Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (MAPs). With the participation of cultivators, herbal traders, academic scientists, and policymakers, this meet emphasized value chain strengthening—from farm to formulation. Key discussions included GAP (Good Agricultural Practices), market accessibility, certification, and biodiversity conservation. Chaired by Dr. Shrinivas Patil and Dr. Nayeem Khatib, with the participation of Mr. Anand Kale and other industry figures, this meet highlighted sustainable models for livelihood through herbal farming and the importance of aligning cultivation practices with market demand and scientific validation.



Ethnoenterpreneurship development, Grower’s, Buyer’s & Seller’s Meet during the SFEC 2025

From the richness of panel dialogues and keynote insights to the vibrant healer interactions and research showcases, SFEC 2025 embodied the vision of a globally interconnected, locally rooted health ecosystem. It successfully created pathways for the translation of traditional practices into scientifically-backed, socially relevant, and commercially viable healthcare solutions.

### **Networking and Collaboration Opportunities**

A dedicated exhibition area was set up as a significant attraction of the event. The exhibition was hosted as a platform to showcase the dynamic and diverse contributions of various institutions, companies, and organizations in the field of ethnopharmacology and medicinal plant research. More than 22 reputed organizations, academic institutions, research institutes, universities,



startups, and industry stakeholders including Society for Ethnopharmacology, India; ICMR - National Institute of Traditional Medicine (ICMR-NITM), Belagavi; CCRAS, New Delhi; Himalaya Wellness Company, Bengaluru, India; Sami-Sabinsa Group, Bengaluru, India; Anchrom India; Jamia Hamdard, Delhi, India participated by setting up exhibition stalls, reflecting their active engagement, innovations, and initiatives in the domain of traditional medicine, phytopharmaceuticals, and bioresource-based entrepreneurship. The exhibition venue became a vibrant center of knowledge exchange, innovation display, and collaborative networking.



Glimpse of SFEC 2025 at Belagavi, India



Dignitaries, Speakers of SFEC 2025 at Belagavi, India

### Cultural and Social Engagement

Cultural programs, featuring traditional music and dance performances, provided an opportunity for attendees to experience Karnataka’s rich heritage. A traditional banquet further strengthened the sense of camaraderie among participants.



Cultural Program during the SFE 12<sup>th</sup> International Congress of SFE, (SFEC 2025)

## Valedictory Program

The Valedictory Program of the 12<sup>th</sup> International Congress of the Society for Ethnopharmacology (SFEC2025), held on March 08, 2025 at KLE College of Pharmacy, Belagavi, brought together eminent dignitaries from academia and industry. The session was graced by Dr. M. B. Patil, Dr. Sunil S. Jalalpure, Dr. Debprasad Chattopadhyay, Dr. C. K. Katiyar, Dr. Subarna Roy, Dr. M. S. Ganachari, Dr. Pramod H. J., Dr. V. S. Mastiholimath, and Prof. Pulok K. Mukherjee. The best oral and poster presentation has been awarded during the valedictory program. The program concluded with a vote of thanks, marking the end of a fruitful scientific gathering and paving the way for future innovations and partnerships in traditional medicine research.



Valedictory Program of the 12<sup>th</sup> International Congress of SFE, (SFEC 2025)

The 12<sup>th</sup> International Congress of the Society for Ethnopharmacology, India (SFEC 2025) was a landmark confluence of traditional knowledge, cutting-edge research, industrial innovation, and policy discourse. By harmonizing ancestral wisdom with scientific validation and technological advancements, the congress significantly advanced the global agenda for integrative health systems. It fostered multi-sectoral partnerships, empowered indigenous voices, and encouraged youth-led innovation in ethnopharmacology. The event also underscored the urgent need for quality assurance, sustainable sourcing, and regulatory alignment in the herbal and phytopharmaceutical industries.