SOCIETY FOR ETHNOPHARMACOLOGY, INDIA

Globalizing local knowledge | Localising global technologies

VASUDHA

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION

The Official Communication and Knowledge Dissemination Platform of the Society for Ethnopharmacology, India

Traditional Knowledge for a Sustainable Tomorrow

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25th International Congress of the ISE, 14th-17th Sept 2026, Foligno, Italy: Precursor to 26th ISE to be held on 27-29 Nov 2027 at Kolkata, India

The Society for Ethnopharmacology, India (SFE-India) participated prominently in the 25th International Congress of the International Society for Ethnopharmacology (25th ISE), held from 14-17 September 2026 in Foligno, Italy. Organised around the theme "Ethnopharmacology and Transcultural Medicine," the Congress brought together more than 150 delegates representing over 50 countries across five continents, providing an important international platform for scientific exchange, collaboration and dialogue on traditional medicine and ethnopharmacological research.

Inaugural Ceremony and International Participation

The Congress commenced at the historic San Domenico Auditorium with an inaugural ceremony featuring a choir performance and addresses by Conference Chair Prof. Domenico Delfino and local dignitaries. The strong participation of India was reflected by the presence of Amb. Lakshmi Swaminathan, First Secretary, Embassy of India in Italy, as well as video addresses from Vaidya Rajesh Kotecha, Secretary, Ministry of Ayush, Government of India and Joint Secretary, Ms. Monalisa Dash .

Scientific Programme: Advancing Ethnopharmacology through Translational Science

The scientific programme highlighted the multidisciplinary and increasingly translational nature of contemporary ethnopharmacology. Presentations addressed diverse therapeutic areas, medicinal plants, traditional healthcare systems and geographical knowledge traditions. Dr. Thomas Hummel (Germany) discussed the plasticity of the olfactory system and its implications for aromatherapy, while Dr. Gunter Vollmer (Germany) emphasised the importance of understanding molecular mechanisms of action for establishing the safety and efficacy of medicinal plant products. Dr. Namrata Lall (South Africa) presented the natural-product development pathway, encompassing therapeutic-problem identification, optimisation of plant-derived therapeutics and progression towards market launch. Dr. Rudolf Bauer (Austria) highlighted the potential role of gut-microbiota-mediated biotransformation in determining the activity of herbal medicinal products. Contributions from Italy, Greece, Mexico, China, Vietnam, Réunion and Taiwan further reinforced the truly transcultural and global character of ethnopharmacological research.



Scientific exchange and networking among ethnopharmacologists from around the world



Prof. Pulok K. Mukherjee at Inaugural Ceremony of 25th International Congress



ISE-SFE Team

Strong Scientific Presence of India

The Indian scientific contingent demonstrated substantial contributions across traditional medicine, natural-product research and translational ethnopharmacology. Prof. Pulok K. Mukherjee, Jadavpur University, presented the translational framework "Explore, Educate and Empower," proposing an approach for transforming indigenous therapeutic knowledge into scientifically validated, accessible and sustainable healthcare solutions. Dr. Sayeed Ahmad, Jamia Hamdard, presented work on the scientific validation of traditional Unani formulations for chronic kidney disease. Dr. Jachak, NIPER Mohali, highlighted the potential of AI-enabled Ayur-informatics to accelerate phytopharmaceutical development and support the global acceptance of evidence-based Ayurvedic therapeutics.

Poster Presentations, Awards and Emerging Researchers

The scientific programme featured 67 poster presentations, including nine contributions from India. Industry member Mr. Amit Varma contributed one of the Indian posters. Indian researchers also achieved notable recognition through poster prizes and travel grants. The awardees included Aftab Alam and Md Reyaz Alam from Jamia Hamdard, Dr. Mandar from NIPER Mohali, and Dr. Sandesh Pattnaik from Bhubaneswar. The Congress also reflected meaningful participation of women researchers and professionals from India. Contributions from Drs. Kakali, Pallavi and Manjula, together with the energetic organisational role of Dr. Pritisha, added an important dimension to the Indian delegation and highlighted the growing participation and leadership of women in ethnopharmacological research.

Towards the Future of Ethnopharmacology

A dedicated discussion led by Conference Co-Chair Marco Leonti focused on the future direction of ethnopharmacology. The discussion emphasised the continuing need for cutting-edge translational research capable of taking promising scientific discoveries towards meaningful therapeutic applications. Beyond the scientific programme, Foligno offered a distinctive cultural setting that complemented the central theme of the Congress. The city's cultural heritage, cuisine and local environment provided an appropriate backdrop for bringing diverse healing traditions into a shared scientific dialogue.

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The Journey Continues: From Foligno-2026 to Kolkata-2027

The 25th ISE Congress concluded with an important transition for the international ethnopharmacology community. Kolkata, India, will host the next ISE Congress in 2027. The transition from Foligno to Kolkata represents more than a change of venue; it provides an opportunity to further strengthen international scientific collaborations and advance discussions on the scientific validation, translation and global relevance of traditional healthcare knowledge.

For SFE-India, the participation at the 25th ISE Congress represented an important milestone in strengthening India's position within the global ethnopharmacology community. The Indian delegation's scientific contributions, recognition of emerging researchers, industry participation and emphasis on translational approaches collectively demonstrate the country's growing contribution to evidence-based traditional medicine, natural-product research and global ethnopharmacological innovation.The scientific dialogue initiated in Foligno will now continue in Kolkata in 2027—bringing India's rich heritage of traditional medicine and its contemporary scientific capabilities to the global stage.

ISE Travel Grant 2026

Dr. Mandar Mahendra Muley, Assistant Professor, School of Pharmacy, Indira University, Pune, received the ISE Travel Grant 2026 and presented his Ph.D. research entitled- "Computational, Pharmacognostical and Pharmacological Evaluation of Leaf and Bark Extracts of Saraca asoca (Roxb.) Willd. Against Neuropathic Pain." His research was undertaken at the Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Rashtrasant Tukadoji Maharaj Nagpur University, under the guidance of Dr. Prakash Itankar, with support from the National Medicinal Plants Board (NMPB), Ministry of AYUSH, Government of India.

Aman Tiwari, Ph.D. scholar at NIPER Raebareli, under the supervision of Prof. Rakesh Kumar Singh, also participated in the Congress with support from travel awards provided by the ISE and the Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF). His participation focused on the theme of transcultural medicine, natural-product validation, global safety standards and therapeutic innovation.

Aftab Alam, associated with the research group of Prof. Sayeed Ahmad at Jamia Hamdard, received the ISE Travel Grant Award, supporting his participation and providing an opportunity to represent Jamia Hamdard's research activities on an international scientific platform.

Best Poster Presentation Awards

Indian researchers also achieved notable recognition for their scientific presentations.

Sandesh Kumar Pattanaik, a Ph.D. researcher from Siksha 'O' Anusandhan (Deemed to be University), Bhubaneswar, received the Best Poster Award at the 25th ISE Congress. The recognition represented an important milestone in his research career and highlighted the quality of Indian research presented at the international forum.

Md Reyaz Alam, a research scholar at Jamia Hamdard, received the Best Poster Presentation Award. The award recognised the quality of his scientific poster and highlighted the importance of effective scientific communication and dissemination of research findings at an international platform.

Strengthening International Research Networks

Beyond scientific presentations and awards, the Congress provided opportunities for Indian researchers to engage with international experts, exchange scientific perspectives and explore potential research collaborations. The participation of young researchers from different Indian institutions demonstrated the importance of international scientific platforms in developing research capacity, strengthening professional networks and promoting evidence-based approaches to traditional medicine.

The recognition received by Indian researchers also underscores the importance of academic mentorship, institutional research support and international mobility in nurturing the next generation of ethnopharmacologists.





Message from the President's Desk



Prof. Pulok K. Mukherjee
Founder & President
Society for Ethnopharmacology, India
Director
Centre for Evaluation of Traditional Medicine
Professor
Department of Pharmaceutical Technology,
Jadavpur University, Kolkata, India

"VASUDHA 2026: Empowering Women, Nurturing Knowledge, Transforming Traditional Wisdom"

It gives me immense pleasure to write this note for 'VASUDHA', the official quarterly newsletter of the Society for Ethnopharmacology, India (SFE-India). A registered society constituted by eminent academicians, researchers, industrialists, and other stakeholders, SFE-India was founded in 2012 with the inspiration of late Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam, former President of India, to scientifically strengthen natural resources and indigenous knowledge systems through research, ethical governance, collaboration, and policy engagement. Having recently marked its 14 years journey, Society for Ethnopharmacology launched VASUDHA, as a dynamic hub for knowledge dissemination, scientific dialogue, and collaboration, bringing together diverse perspectives in ethnopharmacology and traditional medicine.

The word Vasudha evokes our shared Earth, reminding us that community knowledge, biodiversity, and cultural heritage are valuable resources for a healthier and more sustainable future. Traditional medicinal knowledge represents generations of accumulated wisdom shaped by human experiences, interactions with nature, and community-based healthcare practices, and our shared responsibility is to preserve this heritage while advancing its scientific understanding through rigorous, ethical, and evidence-based research. At SFE-India, our main motto is to promote traditional medicine and the dissemination of knowledge on Natural Health Products through our guiding vision: "Globalising local knowledge; Localizing global technologies".

Ethnopharmacology provides an interdisciplinary framework for this endeavour by integrating ethnobotany, phytochemistry, pharmacology, metabolomics, systems biology, and translational research, thereby validating traditional practices, supporting quality and safety assessment, and facilitating the responsible development of natural products and evidence-based healthcare solutions. Furthermore, VASUDHA holds special significance in promoting women's participation and leadership in science through the SFE-India Women's Forum, offering an inclusive space for women researchers, academicians, healthcare practitioners, traditional knowledge holders, entrepreneurs, and young scholars to share their experiences and achievements. Beyond serving as a scientific and knowledge-sharing platform dedicated to advancing the documentation, validation, and application of traditional medicine, VASUDHA acts as a regular structured channel to highlight SFE-India's activities, regional chapter achievements, professional recognitions, and major event reports. Grounded in objectives that strengthen community belonging and create an archival record of the Society's growth over time, the newsletter features research highlights, medicinal plant profiles, expert perspectives, field reports, innovation updates, policy guidelines, and a student and young researcher corner. SFE-India promotes discussion and research on key areas of natural product research, particularly the Indian traditional knowledge system with special emphasis on Indian traditional medicine, working tirelessly through national and international conferences, workshops, policy dialogues, and capacity-building initiatives to facilitate the integration of modern global knowledge into traditional remedies, quality assurance, trade, commerce, and herbal drug development.

The meaningful integration of traditional knowledge and modern science must be guided by scientific integrity, respect for cultural diversity, ethical engagement with knowledge-holding communities, and equitable benefit-sharing. Our efforts extend beyond documentation to understanding scientific foundations, evaluating safety and efficacy, conserving biological resources, and translating validated findings into meaningful societal benefits. I warmly invite researchers, students, traditional healers, industry professionals, and all members of the SFE-India community to contribute their research findings, field experiences, expert perspectives, and innovations to VASUDHA, helping to strengthen our collective understanding, encourage interdisciplinary partnerships, and inspire the next generation of researchers.

As SFE-India continues to expand its academic, institutional, and professional networks across India and beyond, let us work together to nurture a culture of scientific excellence, inclusivity, sustainability, and shared responsibility. Through VASUDHA, we aspire to connect people, plants, knowledge, and possibilities, creating opportunities for meaningful collaboration. Let us explore knowledge, empower voices, celebrate diversity, and transform traditional wisdom into evidence-based solutions for a healthier and more sustainable tomorrow. For further details about the society, please visit the website: www.ethnopharmacology.com.

With my best wishes to the editorial team, board members, and all contributors, I look forward to seeing VASUDHA grow as a vibrant platform for scientific communication, women's leadership, and the advancement of ethnopharmacology.



Prof. (Dr.) Preeti Kothiyal
Director
School of Pharmaceutical Sciences,
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Dehradun, Uttarakhand
National Coordinator
VASUDHA-SFE



Dr. Deepika Singh
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Editorial Note

Dear Readers,

Since times immemorial , the earth has been personified as "Mother Earth", creating a parallel between how women and nature give care, nourish and nurture.

VASUDHA, an ode to this spirit, comes into being as Society for Ethnopharmacology's News Letter.

It's the vision of the Founder and President of SFE Dr Pulok Mukherjee brought into being by the tireless and sincere efforts of the editorial team.

The newsletter embodies the spirit of SFE and has attempted to bring about a holistic compilation. This issue brings forth news from the national and international forums, updates on SFE local and institutional chapters, ethnopharmacologists research forays,Vaidya's perspective,founders message and a brain tickler.

Deep dive and engage with the world of traditional medicines and Ethnopharmacology.

Preeti Kothiyal
Deepika Singh

Activities of SFE (2025-2026)



29 Sept 2026

Jadavpur University, Kolkata, India

Seminar on "Innovative Drug Discovery through Ethnocultural Knowledge,Environmental Sustainability and Interdisciplinary Research"



Prof. (Dr.) Ganesh Kumar, Professor, School of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Swami Rama Himalayan University, presented his research at the 25th International Congress of the ISE, held in Foligno, Italy, with support from the ANRF International Travel Support (ITS) scheme, and established scientific interactions with leading experts in natural products, pharmacology & drug discovery.



19 June 2026

University of Calcutta, Kolkata, West Bengal

Society for Ethnopharmacology (SFE-India) felicitates Prof. Gobardhan Das, Hon'ble Member of NITI Aayog, Government of India, and Director of the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER), Bhopal. An esteemed scientist and long-time associate of SFE-India.



26-28 February 2026

NIPER Mohali, Punjab, India

13th International Congress of the Society for Ethnopharmacology, India, International Conference on Translational Research in Ethnopharmacology: Integrating Traditional Medicine in Modern Healthcare



04 September 2025

Bharat Nutraverse Expo 2025, New Delhi

SFE at the forefront during Special program on "Bioeconomy to Nutrieconomy: Promoting Food as Medicine"



30-31 October 2025

Jamia Hamdard, New Delhi

12th Convention of the Society for Ethnopharmacology, India (SECON 2025) International Congress On Traditional Medicine - Ancient & Modern Concordance

Confluence Café 2.0: Ayurveda for a Healthier Tomorrow

Organized by: Obesity-Diabetes Department, IRSHA, Bharati Vidyapeeth (Deemed to be University), Pune

21 September 2026

Confluence Café 2.0, themed "Ayurveda for a Healthier Tomorrow" under the vision "One Health, One Future," at Bharati Vidyapeeth (Deemed to be University), Pune. Organised by the Obesity-Diabetes Department, IRSHA, as part of its Silver Jubilee Academic Lecture Series, the programme marked the observance of the 11th Ayurveda Day.

The session brought together eminent experts, clinicians, and young researchers to explore the integration of traditional Ayurvedic knowledge with contemporary scientific research. Dr. Shailesh Deshpande highlighted the importance of scientific validation of Ayurvedic principles, while Dr. Sumedh Joshi (AIIMS, New Delhi) discussed drug mechanisms in Ayurveda through forward and reverse pharmacology approaches. The keynote address by Dr. Subarna Roy (ICMR-NITM, Belagavi) focused on translating ethnomedicinal knowledge into evidence-based healthcare interventions through documentation, safety assessment, and quality assurance.

Representing the Society for Ethnopharmacology (SFE), Pune Chapter, Dr. Arulmozhi S. emphasised the Chapter's role in fostering interdisciplinary collaborations, strengthening research capacity, and promoting the scientific validation and translation of traditional medicinal knowledge into healthcare solutions.

The session concluded with reflections by Dr. Supriya Bhalerao, Head, Obesity-Diabetes Department, IRSHA, reaffirming the importance of collaborative research in advancing evidence-based traditional medicine.

Rural Women & Mother Nature : Celebrating Strength, Knowledge & Leadership







Prof. (Dr.) Preeti Kothiyal, Director, School of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Swami Rama Himalayan University, National Coordinator, VASUDHA-SFE during celebration of International Day of Rural Women as Chief Guest in Village Nagthat, Kalsi BLock, Dehradun on 15th October 2026

Global News

Global traditional medicine strategy 2025–2034

Akhilesh Sharma, Pallavi Ahirrao
Department of Pharmaceutical Chemistry, Chandigarh College of Pharmacy, CGC Landran, Mohali, 140307, Punjab, India

Vision

A world in which there is universal access to safe, effective and people-centred Traditional, Complementary, and Integrative Medicine for the health and well-being of all.

Goal

To advance the contribution of evidence-based TCIM to the highest attainable standard of health and well-being.

Recent Developments

Global Traditional Medicines Strategy 2025-2034, adopted by the 78th World Health Assembly in 2025 emphasizes four objectives : strengthening scientific evidence, ensuring safety/ regulation, integrating interventions into health systems, and promoting cross-sectoral benefits while protecting biodiversity and communities. It serves as an updated overarching framework rather than replacing existing technical guidelines.

Key Supporting Initiatives:

- Tracks national policies, regulation, and workforce data across 106 Member States.
- Sets evidence-building priorities to address the critical resource gap (TCIM receives <1% of global health research funding).
- Standardizes metrics to evaluate TCIM integration across governance, financing, and quality of care.
- Verify identity and consistency across species, origin, and processing using botanical, microscopic, DNA, and chemical methods (e.g., HPLC, LC-MS).
- Screen products for heavy metals, pesticides, microbes, mycotoxins, and undeclared pharmaceutical adulterants.
- Standardization and validation with strict limits, recognizing that a chemical marker alone does not guarantee clinical efficacy.
- Systematically monitor and track adverse reactions, dosages, and drug interactions, as natural origin does not guarantee safety.

Recent WHO developments strengthen the emphasis on evidence-based practice, quality assurance, pharmacovigilance and responsible integration of traditional medicine. The 2025-2034 strategy and research agenda provide direction for future scientific investigation, while existing technical guidance remains important for quality and safety. Progress will depend on rigorous research, effective regulation and respect for cultural knowledge and biodiversity.

SFE Annual Awards

Recognizing the outstanding contribution in the area of medicinal plant research and Ethnopharmacology, the Society has instituted several awards which are conferred during the International congress of the society every year.



Clitoria ternatea: An Ornamental Medicinal Vine

Vinayak Upadhya[1] and Archana G Lamdande[2]

1. Assistant Professor, Department of Forest Biology and Tree Improvement, College of Forestry (UAS, Dharwad), Sirsi – 81401, Karnataka, India
2. Department of Food Processing and Technology, College of Community Science, University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad - 580005, Karnataka, India

Popularly known as Aparajita or Butterfly Pea, *Clitoria ternatea* L. is a beautiful climbing plant celebrated for its vibrant blue, violet, and white flowers. Belonging to the family Fabaceae, this perennial herb holds a special place in Indian culture, religious rituals, and Ayurveda. Also known as Shankha Pushpa and Girikarnika, it is commonly grown in home gardens and valued for its year-round flowering.

Beyond its ornamental appeal, Aparajita offers several ecological and practical benefits. Its roots harbour nitrogen-fixing Rhizobia bacteria, which help improve soil fertility. The flowers yield a natural blue pigment widely used in herbal beverages, foods, textiles, and cosmetics. Butterfly pea tea is particularly fascinating because its vivid blue colour changes to purple or pink when acidic ingredients, such as lemon juice, are added. The plant is also used as livestock fodder and as a cover crop.

A Flower with Multiple Benefits

Aparajita beautifully connects nature, culture, and science. From its role in traditional practices to its emerging applications in food technology and pharmaceutical research, this remarkable plant continues to inspire interest in India's rich botanical heritage and the scientific exploration of medicinal plants.



Aparajita (Clitoria ternatea): A Flower of Beauty, Tradition and Healing

A Treasure of Traditional Medicine

In Ayurveda, Clitoria ternatea is recognised as a Medhya Rasayana, traditionally associated with memory, intellect, and mental well-being. Different plant parts, including the roots, leaves, seeds, and flowers, have been used in traditional preparations for various health concerns. Classical formulations include Aparajita Moola Swarasa (root juice), Aparajita Moola Churna (root powder), and Aparajita Pushpa Churna (flower powder).

From Traditional Wisdom to Modern Research

The plant contains several bioactive constituents, including ternatins, quercetin, kaempferol, and myricetin. Scientific investigations have explored its antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, neuroprotective, antidiabetic, and other pharmacological activities. Its floral extracts have also attracted interest in developing antioxidant food-packaging materials. Although these findings highlight its potential, further clinical research is needed to establish therapeutic efficacy and safety in humans.

From Traditional Medicine to Nanotechnology: Development of a *Centella asiatica* Nanospray for Diabetic Wound Management

Ronak Dsouza[1], Shailendra Sanjay Suryawanshi[1]

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Background: Diabetes is a major health concern, and chronic wounds are a serious complication that can be difficult to manage. Delayed healing is associated with persistent inflammation, oxidative stress, poor circulation, infection, and impaired tissue repair, highlighting the need for effective and convenient wound-care approaches. Medicinal plants have long been valued in traditional healthcare for wound management. Among them, *Centella asiatica (L.) Urb.*, commonly known as Gotu Kola or Mandukaparni, has gained scientific interest for its traditional use and potential role in skin repair. The plant is rich in triterpenoid constituents, particularly asiaticoside, madecassoside, asiatic acid, and madecassic acid, which have been investigated for their biological activities. Research on *C. asiatica* and its major constituents indicates potential benefits in different stages of wound repair, including collagen production, fibroblast activity, tissue regeneration, and regulation of inflammation. Experimental studies have also reported improved wound healing following topical application of asiaticoside in diabetic wound models, supporting further investigation of *C. asiatica*-based approaches for diabetic wound care.

Why a Nanospray?

Effective wound care depends on delivering therapeutic compounds efficiently to the affected site. Nanotechnology can improve the local delivery, dispersion, and retention of bioactive compounds in topical formulations. A nanospray enables easy, uniform, and minimally contact-based application over the wound. Incorporating Centella asiatica into a nanoscale system may therefore offer a promising approach for delivering its bioactive constituents in diabetic wound care.

Development of the Centella asiatica Nanospray

Development of a *C. asiatica* nanospray begins with appropriate selection and standardisation of the plant material, followed by preparation of the extract or selected active fraction and incorporation into a suitable nanoscale delivery system. Important formulation characteristics may include particle size, polydispersity, surface properties, phytoconstituent content, stability and sprayability. Further evaluation may include in-vitro release, antioxidant and antimicrobial activity, skin compatibility and wound-healing studies. These assessments are essential for establishing formulation quality, safety and reproducibility before further development.

Potential in Diabetic Wound Management

Healing of diabetic wounds is often delayed by inflammation ,oxidative stress, poor blood-vessel formation, and impaired tissue repair. Nanotechnology-based topical systems are being explored to improve the local delivery of therapeutic agents to such wounds. *Centella asiatica* is a promising candidate because its bioactive constituents have been associated with collagen production, cell growth, angiogenesis, and regulation of inflammation. Incorporating these constituents into a nanospray could provide a novel approach for their topical delivery in diabetic wound care. Further formulation, safety, biological, and clinical studies are necessary to establish the effectiveness and therapeutic potential of a *C. asiatica* nanospray.

Bridging Tradition and Innovation

The *C. asiatica* nanospray brings together traditional medicinal knowledge and modern nanotechnology. Scientific tools can help standardise, develop, and validate plant-based therapies, supporting their responsible translation into innovative healthcare solutions.

Conclusion

Centella asiatica offers an interesting opportunity for research in modern wound care. Its long-standing traditional association with skin health and wound healing, together with emerging scientific evidence and advances in nanotechnology, provides a promising foundation for exploring nanospray-based approaches to diabetic wound management. The journey from traditional knowledge to nanotechnology illustrates how medicinal plants can inspire innovative approaches to contemporary healthcare.

Ethnomedicinal Wisdom of Himalayas: Culture to Science of Healing

Dr. Vikash Singh Jadon

Professor, School of Biosciences, Swami Rama Himalayan University, Jollygrant, Dehradun

The Himalayas are not only a beautiful mountain ecosystem but a rich storehouse of biological, cultural and medicinal knowledge delicately persevered over generations. Native communities residing in the Himalayan landscape have developed a close connection to forests, rivers, meadows and high-altitude environments over time. In this way, there is a strong ethnomedicinal tradition in which traditional healing practices, spirituality and local culture are well connected with nature. Uttarakhand, with its alpine, temperate and subtropical environment, is a part of this medicinal history. Traditional healers such as Vaidyas, Amchis and local herbalists have been around and knew the key benefits of medicinal plants for generations. Most of the information has been passed down orally from families, elders and traditional healers. Women and older generations have frequently been at the forefront of preserving and sharing this knowledge. In the remote mountains, traditional medicine has been a means of health care and community self-reliance. A few Himalayan medicinal plants provide evidence of how traditional knowledge can be used to form the ground for scientific research. Brahma Kamal (*Saussurea obvallata*), a sacred Himalayan flower offered to Lord Shiv, is associated with wound healing with well documented anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties have been reported in experiments. Another plant close to Himalayan culture, Jatamansi (*Nardostachys jatamansi*) is traditionally associated with calming properties of the plant, spiritual practices while its neuroprotective, anxiolytic and cognitive benefits have been studied. Kutki (*Picrorhiza kurroa*) has been used in traditional medicine for liver diseases and experimental and molecular studies have shown hepatoprotective and immunomodulatory effects.

With the need of the hour, modern scientific approaches can help to connect this traditional knowledge with evidence-based research. DNA barcoding and genomic approaches can help identify medicinal species while transcriptomics and metabolomics can give information on their biological pathways and metabolites.

Phytochemical and pharmacological studies can also help us identify potentially active compounds and to study their biological effects.

The Ethnomedicinal practices not only include the medicinal plants but also some unconventional sources of medicine. Cordyceps (Often referred to as Himalayan Gold) for example have been studied in literature and includes cordycepin, adenosine, polysaccharides and ergosterol. Genomic studies have also given information about pathways that lead to production of some of these compounds. But the Himalayan medicinal heritage needs a deep concern. Traditional knowledge is slowly being lost as older knowledge holders die, and younger generations leave mountain communities. Medicinal plants are also being damaged by overharvesting,

habitat degradation, climate change and increased commercial demand. Such issues of biopiracy make protecting community knowledge and intellectual rights even more important. Preserving this heritage can be done more than simply documenting the medicinal plant's uses. It is also important to protect knowledge, people, landscapes and ecosystems that are associated with traditional medicine. Sustainable cultivation, community participation, systematic documentation, appropriate use of biotechnology and conservation of important natural and cultural landscapes should be part of this initiative.

While scientific research should work in conjunction with and enhance traditional knowledge, scientific research for the commercial and community knowledge should respect community ownership and be fair and equitable at the same time. The ethnomedicinal knowledge of the Himalayas is closely related to biodiversity, culture, health and science. Medicinal plants provide not only chemical compounds but also a history of the use of the plants by the communities that depend on them. Traditional healers hold valuable practical knowledge learned over generations. Utilizing that heritage and carefully assessing its therapeutic promise can open new health fields and scientific opportunities and keep the communities and ecosystems that hold this knowledge in mind for the future.

An Observation on Triphala and a Selective Improvement in Lipid Metabolism

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Introduction

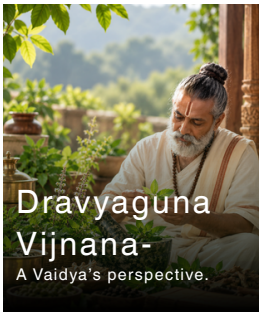
In Ayurvedic practice, laboratory reports can offer useful observations on measurable aspects of metabolism. Such findings must, however, be interpreted alongside a person's diet, daily routine, symptoms, and clinical context—and with careful attention to the limits of the available evidence. This article presents a practitioner observation involving Triphala and changes in a patient's lipid profile. It is an observation, not a controlled clinical study, and it cannot establish cause and effect.

Triphala: Traditional Rationale and Emerging Evidence

Triphala combines three fruits: Amalaki (Phyllanthus emblica), Haritaki (Terminalia chebula), and Bibhitaki (Terminalia bellirica). Chemical analyses have identified diverse polyphenolic constituents across the three fruits, prompting research into possible antioxidant and metabolic effects. In Ayurvedic reasoning, disturbances in lipid metabolism may be considered in relation to Agni (digestive and metabolic transformation), Ama (incompletely processed material), Meda Dhatu (the tissue principle associated broadly with lipid nourishment), and the doshas. Triphala is traditionally used to support digestion and metabolic balance. These concepts provide a traditional interpretive framework; they do not, by themselves, prove a biomedical mechanism.

The Three Fruits: Complementary Roles

Amalaki is traditionally regarded as a Rasayana and contains tannins and polyphenols associated with compounds such as gallic and ellagic acids. Human studies and a meta-analysis have investigated amla extracts in relation to lipid and cardiometabolic parameters. Haritaki is traditionally associated with digestion and bowel regulation. Its constituents include chebulagic acid, chebulinic acid, chebulic acid, and other phenolic compounds. Experimental studies have reported several biological activities, including possible effects on lipid metabolism; findings from animal studies



acids. Human studies and a meta-analysis have investigated amla extracts in relation to lipid and cardiometabolic parameters. Haritaki is traditionally associated with digestion and bowel regulation. Its constituents include chebulagic acid, chebulinic acid, chebulic acid, and other phenolic compounds. Experimental studies have reported several biological activities, including possible effects on lipid metabolism; findings from animal studies cannot be assumed to apply directly to humans.

Bibhitaki is traditionally associated with Kapha and Meda-related imbalance. Laboratory studies have examined its extracts in relation to LDL oxidation, oxidative stress, inflammatory responses, and pathways involved in lipid accumulation and energy metabolism. These findings offer scientific questions for further study, rather than proof of a patient-specific effect. Together, the three fruits may have complementary actions, potentially involving oxidative stress, inflammatory signalling, digestive processes, lipid metabolism, and

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the gut environment. These remain proposed pathways. A systematic review of randomised studies reported favourable changes in some lipid parameters in several studies, while also noting the need for larger and better-designed trials.

The Practitioner Observation

An adult patient's lipid profile was assessed on 7 July 2026 and again on 29 August 2026. Triphala was started on 11 July 2026 and was reportedly taken regularly at 10 g per day in two divided doses. The formulation contained Haritaki, Bibhitaki, and Amalaki in a 1:2:3 ratio and was described as organically sourced. No other concurrent medicines or adverse events were reported, and the patient followed a normal vegetarian diet.

What the Two Reports Show ?

The most striking change was in serum triglycerides, which decreased from 299.08 mg/dL on 7 July to 116.90 mg/dL on 29 August 2026—approximately a 61% reduction. VLDL cholesterol also decreased, from 59.82 mg/dL to 23.38 mg/dL. Because VLDL is commonly estimated from triglyceride values in routine reports, this parallel change is expected. The overall pattern was mixed. Total cholesterol, LDL cholesterol, and the total cholesterol-to-HDL ratio increased, while HDL changed only slightly. The results therefore should not be presented as a complete correction of dyslipidaemia. They indicate a pronounced but selective reduction in triglycerides during the period in which Triphala was reportedly used.

Parameter	7 July 2026 (mg/dL)	29 August 2026 (mg/dL)	Observed change
Total cholesterol	179.5	205.62	Increased
Triglycerides	299.08	116.9	Decreased markedly
HDL cholesterol	35.45	34.67	Slight decrease
LDL cholesterol	84.23	147.57	Increased
VLDL cholesterol	59.82	23.38	Decreased markedly
Total cholesterol/HDL ratio	5.06	5.93	Increased

Clinical Interpretation and Conclusion

This practitioner observation documents a substantial reduction in triglycerides and VLDL during a period when Triphala was reported as the only medicinal intervention. The pattern is compatible with some traditional interpretations and emerging research, but it does not establish that Triphala caused the changes. The concurrent rise in LDL and total cholesterol is an important finding and prevents the result from being described as an overall improvement in the lipid profile.

Repeat fasting lipid testing, careful documentation of diet and lifestyle, confirmation of formulation details, and appropriate clinical follow-up would help clarify the pattern. Readers should not start, stop, or replace prescribed lipid-lowering treatment on the basis of this single observation. The case illustrates the value of bringing traditional knowledge into dialogue with scientific evidence while maintaining accurate reporting, clinical caution, and transparent acknowledgement of uncertainty.

Limitations of the study

Important details were not documented or confirmed: fasting status, exact dosing times, Anupana, manufacturer or batch information, and independent verification of adherence. Although the practitioner reported that laboratory methods were identical, the tests were performed at different diagnostic centres. These limitations should be considered when interpreting the results.

Durga Puja: Kolkata's Ethnocultural Heritage - a Festival for Everyone

Zamindar's courtyard to the neighbourhood street

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The city of Kolkata is almost stereotypically associated with Durga Pujo, and having grown up here, I wouldn't disagree. The way the city comes alive, with people out on the streets all night till dawn, feasting on street food and pandal-hopping, making the Devi our own and shedding tears when she leaves, makes the Kolkata of those five days so unlike the rest of the year. Yet worshipping the Devi was once largely the preserve of upper-caste Hindu households. How did this Pujo become so common that everyone participates in it, regardless of geographical or religious boundaries? These five days of autumn or 'shorot' belong to everyone, to worship the goddess with all the desires and hopes of their hearts. The story of how Pujo travelled from the zamindar's courtyard to the neighbourhood street begins long ago. The worship of Durga in autumn is mentioned as early as the 14th/15th century in Krittibas Ojha's Bengali Ramayana, and many modern Pujo practices were introduced in the 18th century by Raja Krishna Chandra Roy of Nadia. Back then, Durga Pujo was a lavish affair hosted mainly by zamindars (landowners). Their legacy lives on in the bonedi bari pujos of Calcutta, traditional family affairs with their own rituals and culture. The first Durga Pujo of Calcutta was held in 1610 at Laxmikanta Majumdar's home. The popular Sovabazar Rajbari Pujo in north Kolkata was started by Raja Nabakrishna Deb to celebrate Robert Clive's victory at the Battle of Plassey in 1757. It is said that Clive, a British citizen and practising Christian, offered a basket of fruits, 101 rupees and a sacrificial goat! Gradually, Durga Pujo became an annual event where Bengali babus and the English gentry indulged in lavish feasts, music and dance.



Among these zamindari pujas, few are as distinctive as the one at the Daw Bari (Bandukwala Daw Bari) in Jorasanko, North Kolkata. The family, pioneers in the arms and gunpowder trade during the British Raj, was founded by Narsingha Chandra Daw around 1859–1860 and has hosted its aristocratic Pujo for over 160 years. During the sacred Sandhi Puja and aarti, antique 17-inch cannons and Winchester repeating arms are fired. On Dashami, a thunderous gun salute in the open sky marks the Goddess's departure and her journey back to Kailash.

Continued on page 9

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Around 1790, twelve friends in Guptipara, in Hooghly district, were denied entry to a landlord's Pujo and decided to organise their own. This was the beginning of the barowari, or community Pujo- local businesses and individuals paid subscriptions to fund the Pujo in their neighbourhood, and sarbojonin, or "everyone's" Pujo: the pandals that now fill Kolkata with their themes and welcome everyone, is now a common sight. As the freedom struggle intensified, nationalist protest became an integral part of Sarbojonin Durgotsab across Bengal. Freedom fighters like Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose organised community Pujos with the goddess representing Bharat Mata. At a time when open expressions of revolution were restricted by the colonial government, the young people of Bengal used a much-loved local festival to send a strong message of dissent.Pujo in Kolkata isn't just about worshipping the goddess. It is a huge economic boost for artisans, musicians and the publishing industry, where Pujo-special releases are an annual event. Then there are the theme Pujos, which turn the city into a living exhibition for five days. Durga Puja in Kolkata was inscribed on UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage list in 2021, and the themes range from history to contemporary social issues. Durga Puja in Kolkata was inscribed on UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage list in 2021, and the themes range from history to contemporary social issues.

Pujo in Kolkata isn't just about worshipping the goddess. It is a huge economic boost for artisans, musicians and the publishing industry, where Pujo-special releases are an annual event. Then there are the theme Pujos, which turn the city into a living exhibition for five days. There is a ritual at the heart of Pujo that will feel familiar among the SFE fraternity.



On Saptami (7th day of the Devi worship) morning, the Nabapatrika is bathed and draped in a sari, and worshipped as the goddess herself. It is a bundle of nine plants, among them banana, turmeric, bel, pomegranate and ashoka, each associated with a form of the Devi. Long before the pandals and the crowds, Pujo was, in part, a celebration of the plant world and the wisdom that has grown around it, offering a valuable perspective on the relation between cultural diversity and biodiversity. Pujo 2027 beckons you all with festivities and SFE-International Congress 2027 on its heels. By the time you arrive in November 2027 for the congress, the dhaks will have fallen silent and the Devi will have begun her journey home, but the spirit of Pujo never quite leaves this city. You'll find it in the adda at street-corner tea stalls, in the sweet shops, in the old rajbaris and in the gentle warmth of a Kolkata winter.

We are delighted to welcome you, and hope you leave with a little of Kolkata's mishti in your heart.

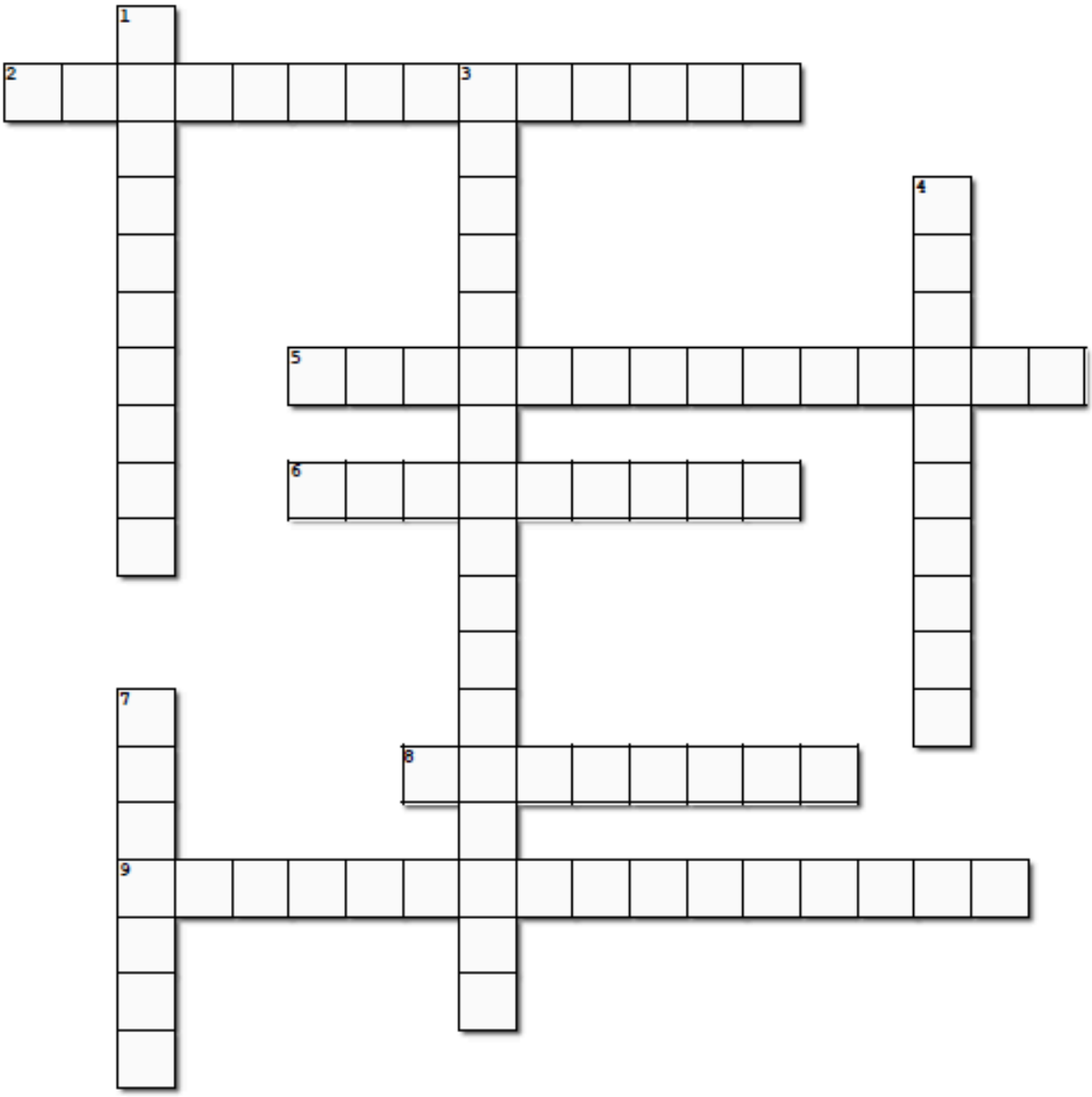






ETHNOPHARMACOLOGY PUZZLE

"Decode the healing tradition"



Across

2. Genetic, chemical and ecological variation contributing to differences in medicinal plant activity
5. The discovery strategy in which biodiversity and traditional knowledge become sources of pharmacological leads
6. Nitrogen-containing secondary metabolites with potent bioactivity
8. Traditional knowledge passed down through generations
9. Plant-derived molecule used as a lead or prototype in drug discovery

Down

1. The complete set of chemical constituents present in a biological sample
3. Interdisciplinary field investigating therapeutic practices and materia medica of culturally distinct populations
4. Evaluation of the safety profile of a medicinal substance
7. A fragrant plant compound often found in essential oils

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