

Indigenous traditional knowledge should be given proper emphasis in IP system: CMFRI



Kochi: The ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) has called for the Intellectual Property (IP) system to be strengthened to fully recognise indigenous people's ownership of their traditional knowledge. The premier institute underscored the role of intellectual property on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 2 concerning genetic resources and their impact on developing countries. It also highlighted the risks of biopiracy, where genetic resources are exploited without consent or benefit-sharing agreements, leading to the marginalisation of indigenous communities and exacerbating inequalities.

Dr Kavitha Chalakkal, Assistant Professor at the Inter-University Centre for IPR Studies of the Cochin University of Science and Technology (CUSAT), said developing countries, rich in biodiversity and traditional knowledge, often face challenges in benefitting from their genetic resources due to asymmetrical power dynamics and inadequate legal frameworks.

"Indigenous people and local communities have a long history of managing genetic resources which are essential to sustain their livelihood. About 75 per cent of the world's population relies largely on plant-based traditional treatments for primary healthcare. Indigenous people, including smallholders, fisher folk and forest dwellers, should be given a fair share in the economic, medical or social benefits earned by the use of their traditional knowledge or practices," she said.

CMFRI Director Dr A. Gopalakrishnan said utilising intellectual **property** frameworks effectively allows us to unlock the full potential of innovation, addressing complex global challenges such as poverty, inequality, climate change, and healthcare access.