

## BOOK REVIEWS

A multi-staged method has been developed to validate medical knowledge through the Documentation and Assessment of Local Health Traditions (DALHT) format and the verified remedies are entered in the community register in the presence of the village Sarpanch. Further, the herbs necessary for the verified remedies are cultivated in the herbal nursery and distributed to villagers at a cheap price. In the case of malaria, herbal decoction (kashaya) was distributed to a randomized study group for three months against a control group in a village with high record of the disease. Out of 13 incidences, there was 1 in the study group against 12 in the control group, and in another village the proportion was 1 and 6 respectively. The effort only covers primary health care; chronic and acute diseases will have to be referred to the medical facility. Such evaluation serves to encourage sound medical practices and eliminate the unsound ones. Efficacious traditional practices to manage malaria, that is a major public health problem, are disseminated from one locality to a larger population. Similarly, workshops have been conducted for folk healers to assess their bone-setting practices and streamline them.

FRLHT is one of the very few institutions that has developed a scientific methodology to validate knowledge *in situ*; this is valuable because the indigenous medical skills serve a large section at very low costs and folk healers do not receive any attention in health policy. Throughout the world, governments are including alternative medicine in their health care, and allopathic doctors are seeking to qualify themselves in Ayurveda or Chinese medicine in Europe and the US. Alternative medical practitioners trained under apprentice systems are also allowed to practice medicine for primary health in several countries. It is high time that the medical and scientific community in India shows curiosity about the indigenous systems of medicine.

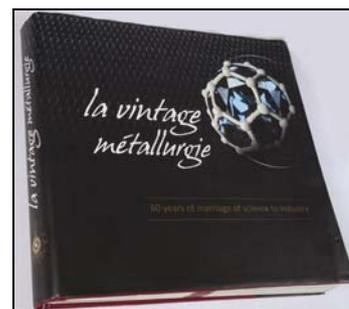
The third section of the book covers investigations on indigenous agricultural practices conducted under the aegis of CIKS, by agricultural botanists, plant pathologists and entomologists. CIKS does for agriculture what FRLHT does for medicine. It not only identifies effective practices, but also strives towards the larger goal of preserving genetic diversity through documentation of tradi-

tional seed varieties and making them available to the interested farmers for propagation. The first essay in the third section reports a study of ten traditional rice genotypes, their productive and morphological characteristics (totally 13 traits). Results lead to the identification of 3–4 rice genotypes for further research as they showed superior performance in most of the traits studied. The next article reports an investigation into the resistance of 31 traditional rice varieties and four cultivars to sheath blight disease, out of which two tolerant types were identified. The study also led to significant conclusions about plant characteristics and disease resistance. Another investigation of traditional treatment of fusarial wilt in tomato crop conducted both in the laboratory and the field shows how the seeds soaked in 100% cow's milk for 8 h and fumigated with sweet flag powder for 5 min reduced disease incidence compared to groups that received reduced concentration of the same and those that received conventional chemical treatment with carbendazim. Another study in the collection evaluates different local practices to eliminate rodents.

The last summing-up essay in the volume is almost a repetition of the introductory essay and could have been avoided. Even if the volume is intended to present the South Indian experience, a discussion of the work of COMPAS partners in other countries would have helped contextualize issues about indigenous knowledge today in a broader perspective. The volume presents a rigorous methodology for validation of indigenous knowledge and would benefit NGOs, students of agriculture, animal husbandry and medicine, and extension workers in government departments of agriculture and health as well as anthropologists.

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**la vintage métallurgie: 60 Years of Marriage of Science to Industry.** CSIR-National Metallurgical Laboratory, Jamshepur. 2011. 411 pp. Price not mentioned.

The book under review is an account of 60 years' journey of the National Metallurgical Laboratory (NML), Jamshepur. The aim of establishing NML was to develop the technologies for metallurgical industries required for the country through fundamental and applied research, including pilot-scale development. The laboratory has strived to achieve excellence through the visionary leadership of distinguished personalities and dedicated scientists and staff. There was a need to have all these achievements along with significant real contributions documented properly so that it will guide the policy makers and the younger generation to take it to newer heights. Therefore, it is an apt time to bring out all the facts of the past in an artistic fashion so that it becomes inspiring and interesting as well. Thus, the publication of this book is appropriate and will serve as a good contribution and guide towards the marriage of science and industry.

There are nearly 31 chapters with an attractive, rather romantic title coinciding with important concepts of metallurgy and representing different eras of the evolution of NML. The first chapter starts with the scenario of metallurgical industries in India during the pre-independence era, and with the creation of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and subsequently NML coming under CSIR in 1946. After a systematic and chronological description of developments amalgamated with emotions and visions of various leaders and distinguished personalities, it ends with an articulated vision for the future. The creative writing along with anecdotes and photographs has made this book a valuable document. The classifi-

cation of the chapters in terms metallurgical analogy has made it impressive. This is a juxtaposition of creative writing, stand-alone pages, snippets, anecdotes and photographs, depicting the grand history of NML. The introduction is encouraging and makes us feel proud to know that our ancestors had mastered the skill of producing metallic alloys in various shapes, albeit without documenting the technology. Ancient India's contribution to metallurgy includes the Delhi Iron Pillar, iron beams at the Sun Temple in Konark, Damascus swords made from legendary Wootz steel and bronze statues in the temples of South India made from lost wax process. This legacy gives a driving force to continue and build further on the heritage and establish leadership in the world. The detailed compilation with an artistic touch has made reading this book enjoyable. It also records the organized growth

of NML, fulfilling the vision of the founder. NML has developed several technologies for metallurgical industries, which shows that the laboratory has played an important role in industrial research and development in the country.

The book has also a detailed compilation of messages across the world, reminiscences, distinguished visitors and information on manpower, budget, technology transfer, publications and patents. Thus it can be considered as a judicious concoction of the achievements and glory of NML, as well as the emotion and sentiments of hundreds of those who have been associated with it since inception. It is clear from the book that NML was and continues to be inspired by the words of Jawaharlal Nehru while inaugurating the laboratory on 26 November 1950: 'the marriage of science to industry for the progress of both'. The publication will serve to entertain as a coffee

table book, as well as a serious reference manual for students and academicians, industrialists and practitioners of metallurgy and materials science of the present and future generations. Jargons which are normally inevitable for any technical presentation have been carefully avoided in this book; thus even non-specialists can enjoy reading about the journey of NML from the past to present and the proposed journey to the future. It will be great asset to have a copy of this book in any library; though the e-copy will be available at <http://eprints.nmlindia.org/4360>.

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